

ISLĀM:  
THE COVENANTS FULFILLED

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## Preface

The title of this book refers to the fulfillment of the two Covenants: the Covenant of the Children of Ādam and their descendants with God acknowledging His Lordship over them; and the Covenant of the Prophets, i.e. of Nūḥ, of Ibrāhīm, of Mūsā, and of ʿĪsā with God. They were asked to acknowledge the coming of a Messenger after them who would confirm whatever was with them of the Scripture and the wisdom that God gave them, and to believe in him and give him their support. They acknowledged it. Then the Messenger who would come after them, i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad, would come in time and take his turn to confirm for himself whatever was with the Prophets by incorporating them with what was with him, i.e. the Qurʾān, into the universal religion of Islām that he brought. Thus the Prophet Muḥammad fulfilled both primordial Covenants.

This book is written as a discourse, a discourse with my fellow-believers the Muslims, intended for those of discernment among my friends and students familiar with my writings and my method of reasoning. It is also directed against those among the distinguished Muslim scholars of high achievement who claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qurʾān. They also attempt to alter the proper meaning and function of the key words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* in such a way as to bring about radical changes that would relegate the religion of Islām to the status of a *millah*. However, with God's guidance and His aid, I have proven their claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qurʾān, and the related issues, to be false and based on a deceptive mode of reasoning. Intelligent readers of this discourse will find that out for themselves.

There are no footnotes in a discourse. Nor are there notations to page numbers for the reader to consult previous passages that convey relevant ideas that come to mind as the discourse takes its pace. This way of drawing attention to the reader to pause and consult previous passages interrupts and distracts the reader's trend

of thought which is meant to be drawn by the discourse to reach its proper conclusion. An idea, if it pertains to a reality, not to an illusion, or a falsity, needs to be repeated and woven into another similar idea so that its previous meaning becomes enhanced in a new contextual perspective. In this discourse, if I wish to recall an important idea in a previous passage, I would just take the passage out and weave it into the present discourse. In this way the repetition committed is justified as a valid method of widening the scope of understanding because it serves a different context of thought. It is no longer a simple repetition of an idea in a previous passage; something new and important has been added to it.

And now, I begin this discourse by affirming my agreement with the Muslim philosophers, metaphysicians, and theologians, that man is not a composite of soul and body, but a third entity whose existence is indicated when he says 'I'. This awareness of one's individual self as an existing reality is established upon the perception of the real nature of intelligibles abstracted from matter, space, and position that belongs to the cognitive intellect of the rational soul of man. But as to how the soul and the body, possessing essentially two different characters, could merge into a new and a single being identified as a third entity, this problem has never been solved by the Muslim philosophers, metaphysicians, and theologians in the past till the present day. In this discourse, I have given a new explanation based entirely on what God says in the Qur'ān (*Al-An'ām* (6): 60), and (*Al-Zumar* (39): 42). To explain the intended meaning of what God says there I have illustrated the meaning intended by an excellent and apposite analogy of the 'saturated sponge'. My analogy, in its conception, is inspired by what God says in the Qur'ān. The analogy's precise correspondence with what He says there makes the analogy a fundamental part of the interpretation of the intended meaning of those passages in the Qur'ān. The intended meaning is the only solution to the unsolved problem of how the two essentially different characters of the soul and the body merge into a new and a single being identified as a third entity.

When I was writing this discourse, explaining the results of my investigations to my students and followers of intelligence and

discernment, I told them that this discourse was for me as a journey along the lowlands, across the foothills, and over the mountain peaks of thought discovering astonishing events that occurred in the past effecting the present without altering the future in that which has already been recognized and acknowledged by the Muslim *ummah* as the truth. I was aware that God prompted me to go on with this journey to the very end, and aided me as the occasion demands with inspired knowledge confirmed by veridical feeling to gather together the separate discoveries till they fit into one another as a comprehensive whole. I have done that. My intelligent and discerning readers will be able to confirm what I just said by the time they reach the end of this discourse. And now, in conclusion to this Preface, I render grateful thanks and Praise to God for His guidance and His aid.



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الحمد لله رب العالمين  
الصلوة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين

We define man as a rational animal where the term ‘rational’ signifies the term *nāṭiq*, from the root *naṭaqa*, which conveys the meaning of articulated speech; and the term ‘animal’ signifies the term *ḥayawān*, from the root *ḥayy*, which conveys the meaning of organized being infused with a vital spirit, a living being. It is important to note here that even though the meaning of the term ‘animal’ can be taken to refer to an organized being infused with a vital spirit, yet it is generally understood to refer to ‘beast’. In order to distinguish man from beast, we prefer to translate the term *ḥayawān* in our definition of man not as ‘animal’, but as ‘living being’. The reason for this will become clear in the course of our commentary on the nature of man. Thus our definition of man as *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*, the living being that speaks. This speech issues forth from the *nuṭq*, the root of language inherent in the cognitive faculty of the soul, the *nafs* called the articulate soul, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*. In the Holy Qur’ān it is stated that when God called to the souls of the Children of Ādam, or mankind: ‘Am I not your Lord’, and they answered ‘Yes indeed!’ (*al-A‘rāf* (7): 172), we infer from this *āyah* that God gave the soul the power of speech, the *nuṭq* with reference to the *qawl* in the sacred text, to respond to His call. This means that the soul knows God as its Lord; that it knows itself as His creature; that it knows other souls as distinct from itself; and that it knows how to discriminate and make distinctions. It possesses power to apprehend what knowledge communicates and to communicate what it apprehends. For this reason, that is the soul’s possession of a cognitive power enabling it to identify its Lord and Creator, itself and other souls like itself, and to articulate and to discriminate and make distinctions as well as to formulate and communicate meaningful symbols by means of this power of



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speech that is called the *nutq*, the soul is called *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, the articulate soul. The *nutq* is the original root (*aṣl*) of mankind. Hence our definition of man as *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*, the living being that speaks.

This cognitive and articulate power of the soul that apprehends the meaning of the universals and that formulates meanings, which involves acts of judgement, discrimination, distinction, and clarification is what constitutes man's rationality. To exercise this cognitive and articulate power with justice, God taught man after creating him, the science of *al-bayān*. The articulation of symbolic forms by means of words into meaningful patterns and formulas is none other than the audible and visible expression of the unseen inner reality that we call '*aql*'. The word '*aql*' itself, from the root '*aqala*', signifies an act of grasping, withholding or binding, so that in this respect it signifies an active entity that grasps and binds objects of knowledge by means of words and identifies their meanings and proper places in a system of relations. This unseen active inner reality is *al-ʿaql*, the intellect. The intellect is a spiritual substance, a power that belongs to a single, conscious and active reality referred to in the sacred text as *al-rūḥ*, the spirit. The *rūḥ* is the spirit of man that carries the *amānah*, the Trust of Vicegerency. It is endowed with the capacity to be the abiding center of knowledge. To it refers the three other names mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān sometimes as *al-nafs*, the soul; or *al-qalb*, the heart; or *al-ʿaql*, the intellect. Because of the dual nature in the constitution of man, the spiritual and the physical, each of these four terms conveys a dual meaning respectively; a meaning unto itself as spirit, and a meaning related to its association with the governance of the physical nature of man. In relation to its rule over the body the *rūḥ* is called the *nafs*, the soul of man; as an organ of spiritual perception it is called the *qalb*; as a cognitive and articulate power it is called the '*aql*'. In relation to the physical nature of man the *rūḥ* is the generator of biological life; the *nafs* is the self, the individual person; the *qalb* is the organ that regulates the circulation of blood throughout the body; and the '*aql*' is the reasoning power of mind associated with the brain. The *rūḥ* has many names identified as *nafs*, *qalb*, and '*aql*', because of its many modes in its relations with the various levels of

existence, the spiritual and the physical. In itself the *ruh* is always in act, engaged at once in its many modes. The names *nafs*, *qalb*, and '*aql*', are not mere names signifying different modes of the *rūḥ* having no reality of their own. The difference in the meanings of their names indicates their specific and individual realities. They are powers and faculties of the *rūḥ*, their relationship to it is somewhat like attributes in relation to the essence. They have reality of their own, only that the reality of the *rūḥ* has priority.

On the nature of man as a special and a new creation, it is important to note that we mean by man *insān*, a name which in the Holy Qur'ān is used to identify the Children of Ādam, the first man and Father of Mankind. Therefore we do not consider man as belonging to the anthropological classification of *Homo*. On the creation of man, God says in the Holy Qur'ān (*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 12 – 14):

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْقَةً فِي قَرَارٍ  
مَّكِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْقَةَ عَاقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعُلُقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظًا  
فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

We created man from a choicest selection of clay;  
Then We made from it sperm and lodged it in a stable dwelling;  
Then We created the sperm to become a clot, and of the clot  
We created a lump, and of the lump  
We created bones and clad the bones with flesh;  
Then of it We originated another creature.  
So blessed be God, the Best of creators.

Our somewhat literal rendering of *āyah* ١٢, ١٣, and ١٤ of the *sūrah* cited above is constructed in plain terms in order to facilitate our explanation of the concept of creation according to the semantic terminology of the Holy Qur'ān. There are three terms in the original Arabic of the sacred text that must be considered in order to understand the meaning of creation. The three terms are *khalāqa*, *ja'ala*, and *ansha'a* as they appear in the translation above



in their relevant context signified by the words *created*, *made*, and *originated* respectively. These need brief explanation.

The words *khalāqa*, *ja'ala*, and *ansha'a* are generally understood to be identical in sense and usage, or considered as denoting the same thing but suitable each to a different context. But as terms and words used to express definite conceptions what they denote, although they refer to acts of creation, is not quite the same thing. To begin with, there is an order of priority and posteriority in acts of creation. In this and in every case *khalāqa* has priority. It is the bringing into existence something for the first time, the thing not having been before. This something is then given its proper measure (*qadar*). *Ja'ala* is the drawing out of some latent thing from something else, the something else having been before. It is also a creative act in the sense of making, producing, manufacturing, inventing, rather than creating. *Ansha'a* is causing to come into being from an earlier thing or after the similitude of a former thing, a thing of a later period, the later thing not having been before. For example, originating a man from a foetus, also resurrecting the original body (*Yāsīn* (36): 79), and originating a later one after the similitude of the earlier one.

*Āyah* 12 of the *sūrah* quoted above tells us about the beginning stage of the creation of man, saying that God created (*khalāqa*) him from a choicest selection (*sulālah*) of clay. *Sulālah* basically refers to a drawing forth of the best or choicest parts from a congested mixture of many different parts. It is an extract drawn out from an excessive accumulation of heterogenous elements. *Āyah* 13 says that from this extract God made (*ja'ala*) a germ of male animal life or sperm and lodged it in the womb uniting it with the female germ. *Āyah* 14 goes on to say that from this fusion of the two gametes God created (*khalāqa*) a new individual organism; and from this organism He created (*khalāqa*) an embryo; and from the embryo He created (*khalāqa*) a foetus. Thus we see from this that the whole process in the various stages of the emergence of the animal being into definite shape and construction complete with organs is not something natural i.e. it is not something due to the workings of nature, but that at every stage it is God's act of creation setting the created thing in conformity with its constitution in the womb (i.e.

its *fiṭrah*). Then from this final foetal stage, God originated (*ansha'a*) another creature. This refers to the introduction of the spirit (*al-rūḥ*) that God breathed into the animal being after He had fashioned it in due proportion (*al-Ḥijr* (15): 29). It is important to draw attention to a significant fact relevant to this *āyah*, that the basic one of the meanings conveyed by the term *ansha'a* from its root *nasha'a* is the meaning 'to elevate' or 'to become elevated'. This means that the introduction of the spirit into the animal being, at once assuming its modal character as the articulate soul (*al-naḥs al-nāṭiqah*), elevates the animal's state of being to another level. It is no longer a mere species of the genus animal; it has now become elevated and transformed into another creature (*khalqan ākhara*) to begin its career as a bearer of the Trust of Vicegerency. This other creature is man.

Man is neither soul nor body, nor is he a composite of the two, but a third entity constituted out of the two. This statement needs to be explained. From what we have said so far, we know that both 'soul' and 'body' are entities having states of existence that may be described as their former and latter states. 'Soul' and 'body' that we refer to here are both creatures that preexist the origination of that other creature, man. In its former state 'soul' refers to the articulate soul, *al-naḥs al-nāṭiqah*, the soul of the Covenant (*al-mūthāq*) taken before its association with 'body'. Similarly in its former state 'body' refers to the foetus, an animal in common with other animals before the Divine spirit is breathed into it. The spirit that is breathed into the foetus is also the articulate soul, a mode of the spirit as well as an entity having a reality of its own, whose presence in the foetus elevates its state of being from that of a mere species belonging to the genus animal to that proper to the requirements of another creature called man. The Divine spirit breathed into the foetus marks the moment of distinction between the former and latter states both of 'soul' and 'body'.

Our saying that "man is neither soul nor body" refers to the former states of being of the two when man has not yet been originated; "neither is he a composite of the two" refers to their latter states of being, though not as a composite because a composite is composed (*murakkab*) of parts that do not merge into



one. The parts do not lose their individual character and identity, like the gemstone set in the ring, or the rider astride the horse. This implies a dualism of 'soul' and 'body'. But man is not that dualism; man is "a third entity constituted out of the two", not *of* the two, the two here being the soul and the body in their latter states from the moment the Divine spirit is breathed into the foetus. The soul is the articulate soul and the body is the one that is transformed by elevation into the body of man. Even though what is constituted out of the two is itself a composite, yet man is not that composite but a third entity, a merging of the essential characters of the two into a new one. This is the meaning of *khalqan ākhara*, another creature, created not as a composite, or a dualism of soul and body, but as a singular being. Man is man, he is his very self, whose existence is indicated when he says 'I', and whose identity is the articulate soul, the soul and reality of man that defines him.

We said above that even though what is constituted out of the soul and the body is itself a composite, yet man is not that composite, but a third entity: a merging of the essential character of the two into a new one. We now explain what we mean by 'merging'. To merge into a single being means to lose or to sink the essential character in another. Soul and body are essentially two different entities. It may be asked how soul and body can each mutually sink its essential character and become a new and a single third entity? We answer by way of our analogy of the saturated sponge. This is an excellent and apposite analogy if only to show the relationship between soul and body. In its saturated state water and sponge are one in form and identity even though they are essentially different. The soul is like water that completely saturates the sponge; the sponge is the body that immerses every part of itself in water. The water can be taken out of the sponge and can be returned or not returned to it. So can the soul be taken from the body and be returned or not returned to it. This is indicated in the Holy Qur'ān where God says that by night during sleep He takes our souls, and by day – if He has decreed that we may yet live for some appointed term – He returns us to life *Al-An'ām* (6:60). Those that He passed the decree of death during their sleep He keeps back from returning to life *Al-Zumar* (39): 42). From these *āyāhs* we

understand that the soul God takes from the body by night in sleep is the rational articulate soul. This means that what is taken from the body is intelligence (*idrāk*) and discrimination (*tamyīz*) as well as responsibility and obligation (*taklīf*) as these belong to the articulate soul. Meanwhile, the body is kept breathing alive by the spirit of life (*rūh al-hayāt*) that in the human body functions as the vital soul. The sensitive imagination that belongs to the vital soul reproduces images from the world of sense and sensible experience in the form of dreams. These *āyāhs* also serve as an allusion to the successive alternation of night and day, to rest and relief from an obligation and responsibility, and to death and resurrection *Al-Furqān* (25): 47).

We have briefly explained above, in agreement with the Muslim philosophers, metaphysicians, and theologians, that man is not a composite of soul and body, but a third entity whose existence is indicated when he says 'I'. As to how the soul and the body, possessing essentially two different characters, could merge into a new and a single being identified as a third entity, we have given above a new explanation based entirely on what God says in the Qur'ān in *āyah* 60, of *sūrah* 6 of *al-An'ām*, and *āyah* 42, of *sūrah* 39 of *al-Zumar*. As far as we know, the relevance of these *āyāhs* in these *sūrahs* to the problem of the nature of man has not been noticed by the philosophers, metaphysicians, and theologians in the past till the present day. We maintain that these *āyāhs* are most relevant to give a solution to the problem of the nature of man. We have illustrated the meaning intended by what God says there by an excellent and apposite analogy of the 'saturated sponge'. To understand the full meaning of these *āyāhs* we have to relate it to the extremely important allusive idea of the alternation of night and day and its involvement in the successive process of the Renewal of Creation. We sincerely and humbly thank God for His guidance and His aid that inspired us to discover how the two different essential characters of the soul and the body merge into a new and a single being identified as a third entity.

The articulate soul is individual as is the case with every other soul like it. It is created in due proportion and order and given inspiration as to what is wrong and what is right for it. Its success or failure depends on whether it purifies or corrupts itself



(*al-Shams* (91): 7–10). Here we find the source for the origin of virtue in ethics. We reject the confusion and reduction of virtue as a kind of value in the modern theory of value. In the *āyahs* of the *sūrah* cited above, the first two refer to the soul in its former state of perfection as the soul of the Covenant; the last two refer to its latter state and its future conduct of liability in association with the body. The body in its former state of animality is already imbued with a vital spirit, the *nafs al-rūh*, having a set of functions and faculties referred to as the *nafs al-ḥayāt*, the soul of life that is carried on to its latter state of growth as the vital soul. This spirit is not the Divine spirit that is breathed into the body of man, but a vital principle of growth common to animals as well as to plants. The body dies when this spirit departs from it.

In the body of man it functions as the *nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah*, the vital soul appointed complete with motive and perceptive faculties. In the earlier *ayah* of the Covenant the souls of mankind are already reminded by God not to make excuses on the Day of Judgement of being unaware of the obligations of the Covenant. This implies that the loyalty of the souls to the Covenant and its obligations will presently undergo a testing whether their loyalty is genuine or counterfeit as the souls are about to be associated with their bodies in the world of sense and sensible experience. The body is equipped with motive and perceptive faculties. The motive faculty is appetitive; it directs movement urged by its subfaculties of desire and anger. It also evokes the arousal of movement through the nerves, muscles, tendons, and ligaments. The perceptive faculty is constituted by the five external and internal senses that receive sensible and intelligible forms. The soul knows God as its Lord, and has some form of knowledge of the spiritual world before its association with the body. With its attachment to the body the soul is provided with the means to know God also, this time through the Veils of His Creation, the physical world of sense and sensible experience.

The soul of man thus equipped is meant to make beneficial use of its body and to rule over it with wisdom and justice. But if it becomes distracted by the allure of the world of sense and sensible experience that the body provides, and becomes heedless

of its Covenant, misuse of the motive and perceptive powers and faculties of the body will follow, and perversity may enter into the state of the soul. In this way the soul corrupts itself. It is because of the assumption of liability of conduct by the soul in its association with the body of man that the need arises for the soul to purify itself. This self-purification pertains to the articulate rational soul, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, and the quality of its conduct over the vital soul of the body, *al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah*. The Holy Qur'ān mentions three stages in which the soul in association with the body will be involved: the stage of the corrupt soul that incites to evil, *al-nafs al-ammārah bi al-sū*; the stage of the soul that censures itself in its effort of self-purification, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*; and the stage in which the soul achieves the tranquil state of purity, *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. This last stage is the stage of the soul's success in fulfilling the obligations of the Covenant, it is the stage proper to *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*.

When we say that every man has two souls, i.e. *nafsān*, we refer to (i) the soul of the intellect or reason: *nafs al-'aql*, or the soul of discrimination: *nafs al-tamyīz*; and (ii) the vital spirit or the soul of the breath: *nafs al-rūh*, or the soul of life: *nafs al-ḥayāt*. When philosophically transposed these two refer to the articulate rational soul, the *nafs al-nāṭiqah*, and the animate vital soul, the *nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah* respectively. *Nafsān* does not mean two independent souls in the sense of a dualism. The *alif* and the *nūn* suffixed to the word *nafs* is not augmentative, and *nafsān* refers to a single entity, to man, having a dual nature at once spiritual and physical. As far as moral and ethical acts and behaviour involving requital are concerned, the true and real agent is always the articulate rational soul.

Man is individual by virtue of his soul. The real man is his soul, the *nafs al-nāṭiqah*. It is immortal, but because of its association with a mortal, a body subject to death when its vital spirit departs from it, the soul, when death happens to the body, will know by experience (i.e. by tasting: *dhawq*) what death is like. So every soul shall taste of death (*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 185). Every soul has its own capacity (*wus'*) to do what is right or what is wrong and will earn its full requital for its righteous or wrongful actions (*al-Baqarah* (2): 286) on the Day of Judgement. That the soul on the Day of Judgement



is capable of denial of wrongdoing is already implied by God's reminder on the Day of the Covenant. So, as a fundamental procedure of justice by which the soul will be judged on the Day of Judgement, the body to which the soul will be returned will be resurrected to give irrefutable evidence on what the soul has done during its probation in the world of sense and sensible experience. The body to which the soul will be returned on that Day will be the original body, for only the original can give true evidence. On that Awesome Day the soul will be silenced; the body's organs of moral and ethical conduct for the use of which the soul is responsible and accountable, the tongue, hands, and feet, will testify against the soul's wrongdoings (*al-Nūr* (24): 24; also *Yāsīn* (36): 65).

We said on the authority of the Holy Qur'ān that the proper term to designate man is *insān*, the *khalqan ākhara* referred to in the sacred text, the merging of soul and body into a single being. Because of this we said that man's nature has a dual aspect, *nafsān*: an aspect pertaining to the spiritual, rational soul, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*; and an aspect pertaining to the physical, vital soul, *al-nafs al-hayawāniyyah*. That aspect that refers to the vital soul is man's biological nature, his physical life, shape and construction, and his bodily origin. Man considered in this bodily aspect is called *bashar*, a term that is proper only to *insān*. *Insān* and *bashar* both refer to mankind and apply equally to male and female. That aspect that refers to the rational soul is man's spiritual nature. It is proper to this nature, that is, his soul, that the term *insān* refers. The true and real agent of man's moral and ethical acts and behaviour is his rational soul operating through its cognitive and active powers in the *insāniyyah* aspect of man. Whether the active power of the soul directs it to purify itself or to corrupt itself, its effect becomes operative in the *bashariyyah* aspect of man. Since man has a dual nature at once of *insān* and *bashar*, it is the *insāniyyah* aspect that acquires the merits of the good or the evil acts of the *bashariyyah* aspect because the intention to do or not to do comes from the *insāniyyah* aspect. The acquisition by *insān* of the merits of what *bashar* does is what is meant by *kasb*, i.e. the earning of reward: *kasaba*, or of punishment: *iktasaba*, for the good or the evil of what man does. Thus it is man as *insan* that is responsible for what he as

*bashar* does, and will be accountable for it not only here and now, but later fully on the Day of Judgement.

God has decreed a determined term for man beginning from his time on earth till the Day of Judgement (*al-An'ām* (6):2). On that Day the *bashariyyah* aspect will be resurrected to become witness and give evidence of man's moral and ethical conduct effected by the *insāniyyah* aspect during his life of probation on earth. After the Judgement, the role of man as *nafsān*, i.e. as *insān* and *bashar*, will come to an end. Man in his *insāniyyah* aspect will be returned to his former state, his true and real self, the soul of the Covenant, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*. In this state a new form will be originated for man after the similitude of his earlier form, though not the same in essential character and nature; it will be changed and not suffer dissolution or death, but will abide forever. This new form will be created from man's *bashariyyah* aspect. The *bashar* will not be put out of existence, but will be originated again by elevation i.e. *ansha'a* into another creature (*al-Mu'minūn* (23):14; *al-Ankabūt* (29):20; *Yāsīn* (36):79). In this new form man as soul will receive requital for the good or the evil deeds committed during his term of probation on earth. Even in this eternal existence in the Hereafter man will travel from stage to stage (*al-Inshiqāq* (84):19), and God will not be frustrated from changing his form into other forms that we do not know.

The world of nature is divided into three principal divisions known as the Three Kingdoms of Nature (*al-mawālīd al-thalāthah*): the animal; the vegetable; and the mineral kingdoms. Man, in his role as a double associate (*nafsān*), a single organized living being at once *insān* as well as *bashar*, has forgotten to assign to himself a separate kingdom because he considers himself biologically in his *bashariyyah* aspect as belonging to the animal kingdom; that he is not different from animals in kind, but different only in degree; and that there is therefore no justification for him to be given a separate kingdom. But even in his biological nature as *bashar* man is different in kind from animals because of the intimate association with his spiritual nature as *insān* which cannot be separated from his physical nature as *bashar*. Moreover, from what is revealed in the Holy Qur'ān about the nature of man as we have explained in our commentary of the relevant *āyats* in



is capable of denial of wrongdoing is already implied by God's reminder on the Day of the Covenant. So, as a fundamental procedure of justice by which the soul will be judged on the Day of Judgement, the body to which the soul will be returned will be resurrected to give irrefutable evidence on what the soul has done during its probation in the world of sense and sensible experience. The body to which the soul will be returned on that Day will be the original body, for only the original can give true evidence. On that Awesome Day the soul will be silenced; the body's organs of moral and ethical conduct for the use of which the soul is responsible and accountable, the tongue, hands, and feet, will testify against the soul's wrongdoings (*al-Nūr* (24): 24; also *Yāsīn* (36): 65).

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the foregoing paragraphs, man is a new and a special creation intended by God to be His vicegerent on earth. This vicegerency is clearly demonstrated by the fact of man's domination over the Three Kingdoms of Nature. We maintain that this is justification for man to be given a kingdom of his own which we shall call the Kingdom of Man, God's vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth. The Kingdom of Man is placed over and above the Three Kingdoms of Nature. In the Kingdom of Man there are no classifications into genera, nor species, no kinds; but only into nations (*shu'ūb*) and tribes (*qabā'il*), races and individuals. And every individual is a kingdom in miniature.

On the historical origin of man beginning with Ādam, the Father of Mankind, there is confusion that must first be resolved, for if not it will lead to more confusion. The confusion referred to is the idea spawned by some modernist commentators that the name Ādam is not a proper name, but a general name standing for mankind as a whole, or a name representing a prototype of man. But when the name Ādam is not taken as a proper name it means that the initial point of beginning, i.e. the point when mankind first began to appear on earth, is completely erased from rational imagination, for there is no individual person to mark its beginning. It follows that the question of man's origin is left to float in the mists of vagueness stretching back into vast ages of the past by the tens and hundreds of thousands of years.

It is obvious that those who spawned this spurious idea have been influenced by the theory of evolution of man as *Homo* from a common ancestor among the various species of anthropoids that have undergone throughout the ages a process of natural selection in biological development. This process of natural selection operates as a sorting out, from among members of the various species, the fittest in the struggle of survival for existence and reproduction. The species that cannot adapt to changing circumstances gradually become extinct. Those groups that survive each gives rise to a new species, only to be subject to the same process of natural selection which goes on repeating itself in space and time right down to the present species called *Homo sapiens*. According to this theory the span of time it has taken for the various species of *homo* to

go through this process of natural selection from earlier forms to the present is estimated to be more than a million years. This theory of the evolution of man and his biological development as a species, and various other theories that anticipate it, are the product of great minds of Western civilization. As such, due recognition and acknowledgement of their profound intellectual and scientific achievements is in order. But as to the truth of their theory that the origination of man is brought about by a process of natural selection in biological development from earlier forms, we as Muslims maintain respectful disagreement.

In contradiction to those modernist commentators who attempt to introduce evolutionist meanings in interpreting the sacred texts pertaining to the nature of man and the origin of mankind, we affirm our belief in God's Words in the Holy Qur'an that Ādam is a proper name indicating an individual person specially created to be His vicegerent on earth. The word vicegerent, i.e. *khalīfah*, in *al-Baqarah* (2): 30, and in other similar *āyahs*, is constructed in the singular to refer to an individual person, even though its meaning is intended to include not only that individual person called Ādam, but to *some* of his posterity already latent in him. That posterity refers to mankind, as indicated in *al-Anfāl* (6): 165, where the plural *khalā'if* is used. In *al-Nisā'* (4): 1, God says that He created mankind from a single person or soul, and from that living person He created of the same nature his mate, and from the two of them are dispersed in multitude numerous men and women. From this we see that Ādam's mate *Hawā'*, i.e. Eve, is also a special and a new creation, created from living being – hence her name. When the name Ādam is used in the Holy Qur'an to refer to mankind generally, that is so because mankind is the posterity of the original individual person called by that name. Indeed, the name Ādam, as indicated in *al-Baqarah* (2): 33, is given by God himself to refer to the individual person so named. Again it is to an individual person that Ādam clearly refers when in *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 59, God makes a similitude of his creation with that of Jesus. The story of Ādam and matters related to him is mentioned in many *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'an. But the *āyahs* of the four cited above are more than sufficient to prove the correctness of our answer to the question at hand.



We derive knowledge of Ādam having a dual nature of *insān* and *bashar* from the *āyahs* that mention the special creation of man as *insān* to be God's vicegerent on earth. But man is also created originally in stages from clay, mud, dust, and bodily organism before being infused with something of God's spirit to assume his role as *bashar*. This something of God's spirit is the articulate rational soul that renders man's nature as *bashar* subject to his nature as *insān*. According to what is revealed in the Holy Qur'ān, God had already taken the Covenant from the articulate soul of *insān*, i.e. of Ādam as an individual person and father of mankind, from before the Covenant taken from the souls of Ādam's posterity (*Tāhā* (20): 115). But having taken the Covenant, Ādam forgot, i.e. *nasiya*. In this connection the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that *insān* is set on forgetfulness, i.e. *nisyān*, meaning that forgetfulness is part of the essential character of man. It is clear from the evidence in the Holy Qur'ān and the *hadīth* of the Holy Prophet that the term *insān* is derived from *nasiya*: to forget. The basic meaning of man as *insān* is forgetful creature.

To forget is to lose remembrance or consciousness of a matter to be attended to, as a result of which neglect or omission to do or attend to the matter follows. This may be harmless, or harmful, or disastrous to one's own interests and may effect others. To forget is something unintentional, but it may lead to the committing of intentional acts, such as betrayal of trust, disobedience, injustice, etc. In the case of Ādam, he forgot the trust God imparted to him, and the obligations of his Covenant, which led him inadvertently to disobey God's command and succumb to the temptation of Satan. Although Ādam did not intend to disobey God and did what he did due to lack of resolve, nevertheless his act amounted to an act of disobedience. By inspiration through God's grace, Ādam became aware that he had done great wrong and both he and his wife admitted guilt and injustice to their own selves. In repentance they asked God to forgive them and were forgiven, and ordered down to earth to dwell there for a determined term.

The *nafs al-nāṭiqah*, the soul of man, the something of God's spirit that is breathed into the body of man, when considered

in itself is free from forgetfulness and therefore cannot forget. But when the soul is associated with the body and assumes its dual role as *nafsān*, at once being *insān* and *bashar*, then its *insāniyyah* aspect, preoccupied with its *bashariyyah* aspect subject to it, becomes liable to forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is a nature peculiar to *insān* only because of *insān*'s intimate association with *bashar*. This means that the origin of man's forgetfulness springs from his *bashariyyah* aspect. It is not the original *nafs al-nāṭiqah* that insinuated into Ādam to forget God's warning command; it is rather its *insāniyyah* aspect engrossed in *bashar*, its physical vital *nafs*, the *nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah*, that initiated the act to accomplish the fact. Indeed, the story of Ādam's fall itself suggests that his forgetfulness and lack of resolve is due to his nature as *bashar*. In this connection and with reference to forgetfulness being characteristic of Ādam's posterity, the Holy Prophet called the Father of Mankind *Abū al-Bashar*.

Everything that has come to pass in succession on a principle of order in God's Renewal of Creation has been predetermined by God from eternity. The unfolding of events in the spiritual world that is carried over into the physical world is the working of God's plan enacted in existential sequence in spiritual and physical space and time. Before the creation of man aeons ago, the Holy Qur'ān tells us that God has already created the physical universe together with all its parts, placing the planet earth within the solar system in order to accomplish His purpose for man. Since the beginning of its creation God causes the earth to evolve over an immeasurable period to make it habitable for man when the proper time comes for him to inhabit it. The whole process of the evolution of the earth and of the creatures that inhabit it before the proper time comes for man is the working of God's plan preparing the earth and its denizens for the coming of man. The proper time comes with the announcement by God to the angels of His decision to create man and to make man His vicegerent on earth.

We must see that this momentous announcement implies that God is speaking about a new and a special creation, and that this creation is a recent event in the history of time. It also implies that man's assumption of his role as God's vicegerent on earth is to take place not long after the announcement. This taking place of



man's role on earth is also a recent event in the history of man on earth, and not in terms of tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago.

Notice that the announcement is construed in the form taken by the verb to indicate the time as well as the continuance and the completeness of the act of creation: "I am about to create", and "I am going to make", expressed by the words *innī khāliqun* and *innī jā'ilun* respectively. We interpret this to mean that what God is about to create and what He is going to make is something not having been before. The creation of man is therefore something new, and before his creation there has been no vicegerent, or *khalīfah*, on earth appointed by God. Man is a special creation because God breathes something of His spirit into him to indicate the completeness of God's act of creation.

We now explain in detail our statement above that God's announcement to the angels is construed in the form taken by the verb to indicate (i) the time, (ii) the continuance, and (iii) the completeness of His act of creation. The time here refers to the beginning, or the first time, of the creative act, and so He says: "*Innī khāliqun basharan*" (*al-Hijr* (15): 28): "I am about to create a *bashar*", referring to the first stage in the creation of man as *bashar* – "*min ṣaḥṣālin min hamā'in masnūn*" (*al-Hijr* (15): 28) – "from dry clay, from mud moulded into shape." Then, expressing continuance in the creative act of moulding into shape, He goes on to say: "*fa idhā sawwaituhū*" (*al-Hijr* (15): 29): "When I have fashioned him in due proportion", that is, as a biological entity of the nature of *bashar* equipped with bodily powers and faculties, "*wa nafakhtu fīhi min rūḥi*" (*al-Hijr* (15): 29): "then I breathed into him something of My spirit", expressing here, finally, completeness in His act of creating man, the introduction of the articulate soul, the *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, into the *bashar*, so that man is not only something incomplete as *bashar*, but is now complete as *insān* as well. Then He taught man as *insān* the science of *al-bayān* (*al-Raḥmān* (55): 3-4), enabling him to understand the nature of all things, or the meanings of the names which God also taught him (*al-Baqarah* (2): 31). Only after all this does He announce to the angels: "*Innī jā'ilun fī al-arḍi khalīfatan*" (*al-Baqarah* (2): 30): "I will make and appoint a vicegerent on

earth", then after demonstrating to the angels man's possession of a knowledge He taught which the angels admit they do not possess, He tells them to bow down in obeisance to man, to *Ādam* (*al-Baqarah* (2): 34).

Thus *Ādam* is the first *insān* and the progenitor of all *insān*. He is created with a rational soul endowed with wisdom and a sense of justice, taught knowledge of the nature of all things, given the power of articulated speech, and a body complete with motive and perceptive powers. He is certainly not a caveman, he is not *anthropus*, nor is he *Homo*; he is not the result of an evolution involving a process of natural selection in biological development from a common ancestor; he is not a genus, nor a species; he is not *Homo sapiens*. *Homo sapiens* is the term used by anthropologists to denote modern man as a species according to their theory of evolution that denies the truth of a special creation.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ طُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

When your Lord took from the Children of *Ādam* – from their loins – their descendants, and made them to testify concerning themselves saying, "Am I not your Lord?", they said: "Yes indeed! We do bear witness.....". (*Al-A'raf* (7): 172)

In this *āyah*, God took a firm acknowledgement of His Lordship from *Ādam*'s progeny when they were yet non-existent in the external world of sense and sensible experience (*‘ālam al-shahādah*), but existed for Him in a spiritual state of existence known only to Him. They existed in union with Him as ideal realities (*ma'āni*) in His knowledge and consciousness. They remain therein as ideal realities in an antecedent state in the interior condition (*buṭūn*) subjective to Him as 'affairs', 'states of activity', 'modes of being', or 'predispositions' (*shu'ūn*) inherent in His Oneness (*al-waḥdah*). His Oneness is the degree of His Self-revelation that is characterized by an inward and an outward aspect. It is from the outward aspect of His Oneness that God causes to arise the ideal realities in a consequent state as realities of things (*ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā'*) that become distinguishable as separate entities (*a'yān*) that

subsist (*bāqiyah*) permanently (*thābitah*) in the intelligible or cognitive presence (*al-ḥaḍrah al-ʿilmiyyah*) of God. This consequent state in which the ideal realities are caused to arise as realities of things takes place in the degree of His Unity (*al-wāḥidiyyah*), in which His Names, Attributes, and Acts perform their concerted creative operations for as long as He wills. His Unity is also characterized by an inward and an outward aspect. It was from the outward aspect of His Unity, i.e. His Divinity (*ilāhiyyah*), that God took the firm acknowledgement of His Lordship (*rabbaniyyah*) from Ādam's progeny. But first He gave them knowledge of Himself as their absolute possessor, creator, ruler, cherisher, sustainer – their *rabb*. He also gave them understanding and discrimination (*tamyīz*) as well as the articulatory power of speech (*nutq*) to respond promptly and positively to His call. Then He took the Covenant (*al-mūthāq*) from the descendents (*dhurriyyah*) of the Children of Ādam.

The *dhurriyyah* present to God in His intelligible or cognitive consciousness were each and every one of them present to Him in their essential character as *a'yān*, i.e. as separate entities that subsist permanently in His cognitive presence even though the term used to describe them refers to infinitely small seeds (*dharrāt* from *dharr*) that would later, in a not yet realized event, be caused to evolve into their future states becoming *nutfah*, then *alaqah*, then *mudghah*, then organized body (*jasad*) infused with a spirit of life (*rūḥ al-ḥayāt*). In their essential character as *a'yān* the *dhurriyyah* contain within themselves distinct essential properties pertaining to their future states. These properties determine their ultimate nature and destiny, and will actualize in themselves, as they are caused to evolve into their future states, what their primordial potentialities (*isti'dādāt aṣṣhiyyah*) have prepared for them to actualize. Everything in the world of the *a'yān* has a double aspect; the one gives impression and produces effect assuming the role of active agent (*fā'il*), the other receives the impression given and the effect produced taking the part of passive recipient (*qābil*). This double aspect in the nature of the *a'yān* is due to the effect caused by the double aspect in the nature of the Divine Names which they reflect. But at this stage of their existence they were oblivious of their future state.

The *dhurriyyah* present to God in His knowledge and consciousness were not exclusively the *dharrāt* which refer to their *ḥayawāniyyah* or biological nature, but the *dharrāt* together with their souls which constitute their selves (*anfus* pl. of *nafs*), i.e. the articulate soul, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, merged together as *nafsān* with the vital soul, *al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah*, subject to it. Considered by itself before its association with the vital soul, the articulate soul is an individual spiritual entity without personality, it is the 'something' in God's spirit (*rūḥ*) before being breathed into the body He had fashioned in due proportion. But after and during its association with the vital soul, the articulate soul is not only an individual spiritual entity described as 'soul', it is now an individual spiritual entity described as 'self', an individual with a personality of its own distinct from that of other selves.

It was to their souls that constitute their selves, i.e. the *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, together with the *al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyyah* that God spoke when He said, ".....*wa ashhadahum 'alā anfusihim*.....", and made them to testify concerning themselves".....Notice that the proposition '*alā*' in '*alā anfusihim*', translated here as 'concerning their selves', the 'concerning' does not simply mean 'about', but it also means 'against', so that what the souls were asked to testify was *for* and *against* their individual selves. Already here we see the implication that the souls will be involved in the future state of *nafsān*, the double aspect in the nature of man as *insān-bashar*, his probation in the external world of sense and sensible experience, his death and resurrection of his *bashariyyah* aspect, and the proceedings on the Day of Judgement when his *bashariyyah* aspect will testify for or against him. God's call to them was said in the form of a question which includes a negation: "*Alastu bi rabbikum?*" – "Am I *not* your Lord?". Their answer using the particle *balā* is significant; it is used normally in response to a question which includes a negation and which annuls the negation, meaning in this case: "On the contrary, You *are* indeed our Lord!" This shows that their witnessing of the truth in the presence of their Lord was of the highest degree of certainty. And so they sealed their firm acknowledgement of God's Lordship with: "*shahidnā*" – "we do bear witness."

But God knew that some, if not most of them, will betray



their selves and their Covenant during their life of probation on earth, for He said immediately after their witnessing: “.....*an taqūlū yaum al-qiyāmati: innā kunnā ‘an hādihā ghāfilīn.*” – “lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: “Of this we were unaware.” And in the *ayah* that next follows: “*Aw taqūlū innamā ashraḳa ābā’unā min qablu wa kunnā dhurriyyatan min ba’dihim afatuhlikunā bimā fa’ala al-mubtīlūn?*” – “Or lest you should say: “Our fathers before us may have ascribed partners unto You, and we are descendants following after them, will You then destroy us because of what the falsifiers have done?” So the excuses they would give on the Day of Resurrection would be (i) that they were unaware of the Covenant, and (ii) that they were not to be blamed if they too had ascribed partners unto God during their life on earth, for they were, after all, descendants, and would naturally follow their fathers in what they believed and worshiped. Therefore the blame should be on their ancestors.

In spite of the implication in God’s words to them pertaining to their future states, they would still remain oblivious in their state of being as *a’yan* in the degree of the Divine Unity (*al-wāḥidiyyah*) where their Covenant was taken. Indeed, in that state of existence they would not know that the *rabb* they had recognized and acknowledged was not only the *rabb* of their world, but also the *rabb* of all the worlds, the *rabb al-‘ālamīn*. They would not know His proper Name, *Allāh*. When God caused to arise within His knowledge and consciousness the active, efficient, and divine manifestations of His Divinity (*ilāhiyyah*), they would not know Him as ‘God’ (*ilāh*). Knowledge of Him as *rabb al-‘ālamīn* and of His Name *Allāh*, and of Him as *ilāh* would only be accessible to their cognition when what is inherent in them become actualized, by the creative command, as human beings (*insān*) here on earth.

The test of loyalty to the Covenant, and obedience to the obligation implicit in it, is by way of religion (*dīn*). As a system of belief, faith, and worship religion is meant to realize its purpose here on earth where mankind, i.e. the *dhurriyyah* of Ādam’s progeny whose existence in the world of sense and sensible experience is now realized, is subject to the limitations of humanity (*insāniyyah*) and the material universe. Religion was not a concept conceived

and originated by the human mind. It was revealed by God through His Prophets and Messengers at the very beginning when human beings appeared on earth and proliferated. There is only one revealed religion. God taught it to His earliest Prophets and Messengers and to those who came after them, who were sent to preach the message of the Revelation *to their own people*. They were sent to their own people in accordance with the Divine plan to prepare the peoples of the world, in their various stages of intellectual and mental maturity throughout the ages, and to test their loyalty for reception of the religion in its ultimate and consummate form as a *universal religion* at the hands of the Last Prophet. This Last Prophet was sent to convey the message of the Revelation not only to his own people, but *to mankind generally* (*Al-‘arāf* (7): 158 and *Al-Sabā’* (34): 28). The essential message of the Revelation was always the same: to recognize and acknowledge and worship Allāh the One True and Real God (*ilāh*) alone without associating Him with any partner, rival, or equal, nor attributing a likeness to Him; to establish regular prayer and practice charity; and to confirm the truth preached by the earlier Prophets as well as to confirm the final truth brought by the Last Prophet as it was confirmed by all the Prophets sent before him. This alludes to the Covenant of the Prophets (*mīthāq al-nabiyyīn*) in *Āli ‘Imrān* (3): 81 and *Al-Aḥzāb* (33): 7.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِءَ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ ۚ قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي ۚ قَالُوا أَقْرَضْنَا ۚ قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا ۚ وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

And [recall, O People of the Scripture], when Allāh took the Covenant of the Prophets, [saying], “Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a Messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.” [ Allāh ] said, “Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?” They said, “We have acknowledged it.” He said, “Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.”



وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَنُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ  
مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٧﴾

And [mention, O Muḥammad], when We took from the Prophets their Covenant and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʿĪsā, the son of Maryam; and We took from them a solemn Covenant.

Religion consists not only of the affirmation both in the heart and mind of the Unity of God, i.e. *al-tawḥīd*, but also of the *manner* and *form* in which that affirmation is *verified* (i.e. *taṣdīq*) as shown by His Last Prophet, who confirmed, perfected, and consolidated the manner and form of affirmation and verification of Prophets before him. This manner and form of verification is the manner and form of *submission, aslama, to God*. The test of true affirmation of the Unity of God, then, is the form of submission to that God. It is only because the form of submission practised in accordance with prophetic example by the religion that affirms the Unity of God, is *true* to the verification of such affirmation, that God has chosen for that particular religion (which is the final realization of revealed religion) the name of *al-Islām*. The form in which submission is made or done is the form of the *dīn*, and it is here that diversity occurs between religions. But the diversity between religions is not only a matter of form, for the difference in the form implies a difference in the conception of the nature of God. Indeed, it is the conception of the nature of God that determines the form of submission to that God. This form, which is the manner of institution of belief and faith, the manner of worship, the manner of religious behaviour and of ethical and moral conduct, the manner of conformity with or to the law of God, i.e. the *fiṭrah* – in short, the manner in which submission to God is practiced in life, is expressed by the concept *millah*.

*Millah* (pl. *milal*) is an ambiguous concept. It may refer to a system of belief and worship that is based upon Revelation, or to a system of belief and worship that is based on cultural, or philosophical, or ethnic and mythological tradition. It is very closely related to the concept of *dīn*, and is sometimes simply confused

as synonymous with it. Whereas in reality, although *millah* and *dīn* refer to the same thing, i.e. to religion, they each do not mean the same thing. Consider for example with reference to religion, when we refer to the religion of Islam we say *dīn al-Islām* and not *millat al-Islām*. In the Holy Qurʾān we find the expression *dīn Allāh*, and there is no such a thing as *millat Allāh*. From these two basic examples other points of difference between *millah* and *dīn* can be drawn.

To discover the real nature of *millah* and its relation to *dīn*, we must cast our vision back into the past even unto antiquity in order to explain how *millah* and *dīn* began to emerge concurrently in history. *Millah* began with the rise of tribal groups of people led by influential individuals of intelligence, imagination and ambition: the priests, chiefs, and rulers. These groups were organized by their leaders so as to gradually expand to become a community practicing the same forms of belief and worship. The forms of belief and worship were understood as custom going back to ancestors, or as cult; sect, rite practiced according to rules and regulations that would later, when the community grew into a nation, be developed into law. Then with the increase in the number of influential individuals within the nation such as the priests and the learned among them, some of whom were also theologians, the forms of belief and worship and the law that governed them were further developed into a system of principles resembling those of religion, i.e. *dīn*. Indeed *millah* in a certain sense was a prelude to *dīn*.

In the beginning *dīn*, like *millah*, also began as tribal groups of people led by influential individuals who organized the groups of people into a community practicing the same forms of belief and worship according to rules and regulations that were later developed into law. But unlike *millah*, the tribal groups were led by Prophets sent by God to preach the message of One Universal God, and not a tribal or a national God. And unlike *millah*, *dīn* was originally revealed by God, not the product of human intervention in the sense of interference to modify the result of the Revelation to its own way. There was only one revealed *dīn*, which unlike the case with *millah*, was not originally understood as having a plural

form. The plural form, i.e. *adyān* gradually insinuated itself into the Arabic language much later, more than a hundred years after the Hijrah, when lexicologists began to include it in their lexicons as acknowledgement of *lexical*, not *theological*, validity for the respective *millah* of the major systems of belief and faith in the world to be regarded as equivalent to *dīn*. This was chiefly because they too, i.e. Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Confucianism or Taoism, and Christianity, each possessed religious books and laws like those of *dīn*, such that their close resemblance to *dīn* was so complete as to become confused with identity. Nevertheless, the plural form of *dīn*, *adyān*, was always understood by discerning Muslim writers on comparative religion to refer to religions other than Islam. We see in this giving of lexical validity to regard *millah* as equivalent to *dīn* that *dīn* itself, like *millah*, has now become ambiguous; it may refer to the one that is genuine, and also to the many that are counterfeit.

When we said that *millah* was a prelude to *dīn*, we mean that *millah* preceded the evolvment of *dīn* from within itself. Genuine *dīn* was revealed by God, but it was evolved from one particular *millah*, the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm who affirmed One God and denied polytheism. God called this *millah dīnan qayyiman* (6:161), an upright religion, because it inclined perfectly, *ḥanīfan*, towards the religion of Truth, *dīn al-ḥaqq At-Taubah* (9): 33; *Al Fath* (48): 28; *Al-Ṣaff* (61): 9): *al-Islām*. All sent Prophets followed the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm in affirming One God and denying polytheism. They thus anticipated Islām in religious belief, in faith, and in worship, and hence were also called *muslim* even though the religion of Islām as such reached its perfect crystallisation only in the form externalized by the Last and Holy Prophet Muhammad. With the exception of the people of the Last Prophet, most of the peoples to whom the earlier Prophets were sent have strayed away from God's guidance, and deviated from the original teaching of the Prophets preferring instead cultural creations and ethnic inventions of their own, claiming these as religions, *adyān*, in imitation of the revealed religion, of the original *millah* of the Prophets. As for the People of the Book, they have evolved a mixture of their own cultural and racial traditions and pagan beliefs with traditions based upon

Revelation claiming their religion to be revealed religion. But the essential character of all these religions is actually of the nature of *millah* which they themselves have evolved to suit their own way. None of them is free from the stain of ascribing a partner, a rival, an equal, i.e. a *sharik* unto God, and they all are as one *millah* in their rejection of the truth, i.e. *kufṛ*.

The word *islām*, with the article *al* prefixed to it, is the proper name chosen by God for this particular religion. It first appeared in the Holy al-Qur'ān. Indeed, this form of the word, i.e. *islām*, was not found in the Arabic language of the pre-Islamic Arabs nor in the languages of the *millah* of the Prophets other than the Last. It is therefore something *new* and was revealed only to the Last Prophet. It was revealed gradually at different times on special occasions both in Makkah and Madinah when the holy Prophet was preaching the new religion and had to defend it in the confrontation against idolaters, hypocrites, Jews, and Christians. God introduced the proper name of the religion the holy Prophet and his group of followers were fighting for, in different *surahs* of the Holy Qur'ān at different times on special occasions as the religion was beginning to unfold its final phase among the Arabs. In this way the holy Prophet and his followers were made to acquaint themselves with the name by which they could identify themselves as a community of believers i.e. *muslim*, in what they were fighting for. God assured them He would protect their religion when their religion was still in the form of *millah* and was yet unrealized as the *dīn* that would be called *al-Islām*. He urged them to fight for its realization and to have no fear of the enemy but to fear and obey Him. He encouraged them with the promise of final victory in this world and success in the Hereafter. All the while as the occasion demanded God praised the religion by name as His choice. He called to them that the true religion i.e. *dīn* in His judgement of worth is *al-Islām* (3:19); that if anyone seeks for other than *al-Islām* as a religion, it will not be accepted of him (3:85); that those whom He wills to guide He opens their breasts to *al-Islām* (6:125). Thus the name of the religion was revealed as an incentive for them to strive for the honour of attaining to it while the religion itself was still in the making and only ultimately, after twenty-three years of



striving in fulfillment of the Revelation, when the holy Prophet and his followers had proven themselves equal to God's expectation, did He tell them: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you *al-Islām* as your religion"(5:3).

The name *al-Islām* for the religion brought by the Last Prophet, the holy Prophet Muḥammad, as revealed to him by God, is pregnant with meaning that encompass religion *as a whole*. Thus in the Holy Qur'ān God says: "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it manifest over all religion"(9:33; 48:28; 61:9). It is therefore not proper to reduce the meaning of the religion of Islām in translation into English to a single word as a verb form like 'submission'. Submission simply means 'submitting' or being submitted; and this means to yield or to cease resisting, to surrender oneself for control, to resign or give up oneself, to accept authority, to endure, to obey, etc. But it is still not clear as to *what* or to *whom* is the submission to be made or done, and how does one *do* submission? If the answer to the first part of the question is 'to God' or 'to the Will of God', it is still not clear as to *who* this God is, Who is to be addressed by name and lauded by the qualities of perfection that belong only to Him. As to the second part of the question, the doing of submission in this case involves many things that have first to be considered *before* the very idea of submission can arise in the soul's faculty of knowing, perceiving, and conceiving. And this requires the soul's prior recognition and acknowledgement of Allāh the One Universal God, Lord and Creator of the Worlds, *rabb al-'ālamīn*, Who is the only Divinity, *Ilāh*, to Whom worship, *'ibādah*, is due. This knowledge, which causes the soul of man to recognize and acknowledge the True and Real God, and to deny any partner, rival, or equal, unto Him, is brought about by means of Divine guidance, *hudā*. Reason alone cannot arrive at the Ultimate Truth. The case of the Prophet Ibrāhīm is proof enough of this (*Al-An'ām* (6): 75-80).

The meaning of submission in Islām is not the same as that conveyed by the word 'submission' in English. In Islām the submission that is meant involves the occurrence in the heart and

mind of antecedent and consequent states of cognition that bring about the condition of submission, such as knowledge of God, faith in God, and certainty about God; knowledge of the self and its origin, of a sense of indebtedness to God; peace of heart and mind, security, freedom, and soundness of heart and mind. For example, the antecedent state of cognition in the case of the Prophet Ibrāhīm began when he argued with his father and his people about their error in practicing idolatry and polytheism (*Al-An'ām*, (6): 74), and also about his own reasoning and enlightenment when God guided him by showing him the power and laws of the heavens and the earth that he might understand with certitude (*Al-An'ām* (6): 75-78). Then God guided him to understand that He is the Creator, *faṭīr*, of the heavens and the earth Who creates, *faṭara*, according to a pattern whereby created things are given due proportions, powers and predispositions, and their proper places, i.e. the *fiṭrah*. It was at this initial stage of his antecedent state of cognition that the Prophet Ibrāhīm was led to utter: "As for me, I set my face resolutely towards Him Who created, *faṭara*, the heavens and the earth, and as a *ḥanīf* I truly affirm my belief in One God, *ḥanīfan*, and I am not of those who make partners unto Him, i.e. the *mushrikīn* (*Al-An'ām* (6): 79). We see that at this stage of his spiritual education, the Prophet Ibrāhīm did not yet know of God's identity as 'Allāh', for he referred to God only as "Him". He knew of God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and about the *fiṭrah*, for he used term *faṭara* in describing God's act of creating. He knew that there is only One God by calling himself a *ḥanīf*, a true monotheist. Then he continued arguing against his father and his people, and against a powerful ruler of Babylon (Namrud) with God leading his reasoning about God against them (*Al-An'ām* (6): 83) that confounded them. Their hostility to him became more intense; they apprehended him and cast him into the blazing fire. Notice that at this stage of his life, words like *amana*, *aslama*, and *muslim* were not yet applied to express his state of cognition. He had first to undergo a series of events in his life before those words began to be applied to him directly and indirectly. These series of events marked the beginning and final stages of the *consequent* state of his cognition.

The series of events that led to the consequent state in the case of the Prophet Ibrāhīm may be sketched in the following list:

- (i) God saving him from being burned by the blazing fire;
- (ii) His migration from his native land to Canaan;
- (iii) His journeys and temporary stays in different places before, during, and after his migration to Canaan. This took a lifetime during which many things happened that increased his knowledge and enlightenment. He was granted intimacy with God Who called him His Friend. God revealed to him His name *Allāh* as His proper identity in His universal dominion as Lord of all the Worlds, *rabb al-‘ālamīn*; in the same way He did to the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount who wanted to know the identity of the Voice that spoke to him, and the Voice said: “O Mūsā, Verily I am *Allāh*, Lord of all the Worlds” (*Al-Qaṣaṣ* (28):30). *Allāh* gave both these Prophets knowledge and wisdom in matters of this world and the Hereafter. When the name *Allāh* was revealed to the Prophet Ibrāhīm it implied that he had attained to the station of *īmān*. His *īmān* was evident from the story of the Four Birds (*Al-Baqarah* (2):260) in which the degree of certainty, *yaqīn*, in his cognition about the mystery of resurrection was confirmed in him from that of *‘ilm al-yaqīn* to that of *‘ayn al-yaqīn*.
- (iv) He was already married to Sarah, who was barren, and after her to Hājar. Hājar gave birth to Ismā‘īl, then his only son. Soon after, and under God’s instruction, he took her and the baby to the wilderness of Marwah near the site where Makkah would be built, and left them there. Hājar’s struggle for survival of her baby and herself from dying of thirst. The coming into existence of the well of Zamzam. They were found by the ancient Arab tribe of Jurhum that happened to set up camp nearby. Hājar gave permission for the tribe to help and stay with them. Ismā‘īl grew up among the Jurhum and ultimately married a daughter of Jurhum with his father’s approval. Ismā‘īl was to be the ancestor of the Arabs.
- (v) Ibrāhīm visited Hājar and Ismā‘īl from time to time. Sometime just before or after Ismā‘īl’s birth he was

commanded by God to submit, *aslim*, himself to the Will of God. He submitted himself to the Will of God. A few years later when Ismā‘īl grew to a young boy ready for work, God commanded him in a vision to sacrifice his only son. The event of the Sacrifice, God’s acknowledgement of how both Ibrāhīm and his son submitted to His Will. The building of the Ka‘bah by Ibrāhīm and his son Ismā‘īl.

- (vi) Ibrāhīm, now 100 years old, and Sarah, 90. Two angels visited Ibrāhīm in their settlement to announce the annihilation of Sodom and the evil people of his nephew the Prophet Lūt, and to convey to Ibrāhīm by the grace of God that he would soon be the father of another son, Ishāq, and from Ishāq a grandson, Ya‘qūb, also called Isrā‘īl. Sarah would be the mother of Ishāq, and grandmother of Ya‘qūb. Ishāq and Ya‘qūb would be the ancestors of the Banī Isrā‘īl and the Jews. Here ends our running commentary of the series of significant events in life that we call ‘antecedent’ and ‘consequent’ states of cognition in the heart and mind that bring about the condition of ‘submission’.

Supposing it is argued, which may in fact be the case, that by the word ‘submission’ as the accurate English translation of the word *islām* is not meant just the basic meaning of the word in the context of English usage, but is meant rather the Islamic sense of ‘submission’ in the context of Arabic usage in the Holy Qur’ān. But in the Holy Qur’ān the word used to mean ‘submission’ is the verb *aslama*, the fourth verbal form of the root *salima*, and not *islām*. It may be argued further that the word *islām* is the verbal noun of the verb *aslama* and it means the same thing, i.e. ‘submission’. It does not mean quite the same thing. A verbal noun expresses a verbal notion respecting words only, not ideas (such as briefly alluded to in the previous paragraph). It expresses the word *islām* as having a verb form meaning ‘submission’ without going into details regarding the ideas respecting the ‘submission’. In this case the argument of the one who argues would be that the notion of *islām* as a word having a verb form meaning ‘submission’ is already used in the translation as a verb, not as a verbal noun, in the context of



ideas respecting the 'submission' introduced into the interpretation of the sacred texts so that it is bounded by definite meanings in and by the Holy Qur'ān itself. But the function of a verb is precisely predication, and in the Holy Qur'ān the verb *aslama* is predicative of the subject and it is *aslama* that defines the 'submission' meant so that there is no need to resort to its verbal noun transformed into a verb. The word *islām* is not used in the Qur'ān as a verb. In the Holy Qur'ān there are only eight instances where the word *islām* is found. Of these there are six instances in which the word *islām* is prefixed with the determinative article *al*: *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 19; *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 85; *Al-Mā'idah* (5): 3; *Al-An'ām* (6): 125; *Al-Zumar* (39): 22; and *Al-Şaff* (61): 7. They all mean to refer to the religion of Islām, not to 'submission'. And even in the case of the word *islām* without the prefix mentioned in two instances in the Holy Qur'ān: *Al-Tawbah* (9): 74; and *Al-Hujurat* (49): 17, the meaning there refers to the profession of belief in the religion of Islām, i.e. to what is in the heart and mind, to *īmān*, and not to what is outwardly expressed as 'submission'. Hypocrites can immitate outward acts but not inward belief. On the other hand, it is the verb *aslama* that is found used everywhere throughout the Qur'ān to refer to 'submission'. So if the argument that 'submission' to translate *islām* is not meant 'submission' in the context of English usage, but is meant rather 'submission' in the context of Arabic usage in the Holy Qur'ān, then in the context of Arabic usage in the Holy Qur'ān the correct word to mean 'submission' in the Islamic sense is the verb *aslama*, not its verbal noun, *islām*, used transformed into a verb.

Let us suppose that the translator is not referring to the usual case that the word *islām*, meaning 'submission', is the verbal noun of the verb *aslama* that produces that meaning, but is referring to his assumption that the word *islām* is a verb. It is possible to believe that from a linguistic point of view *islām* belongs to a class of words having a verb form bearing a meaning that is the product of a verbal noun, such as 'submission' in this case as the product of the verbal noun derived from the verb *aslama*. Because it bears a meaning that is the same as that which is the product of a verbal noun, the word *islām* is used in transition as a verbal noun, whereas originally it is supposed to be a verb.

But this supposition is a modern classification not applicable to the word *islām* of more than a thousand years earlier. A verb is a word that asserts something in regard to something else, i.e. a subject, but a verbal noun does not do so. Therefore, used as a verbal noun the word *islām* cannot function as a verb. Since the translator wants it to function as a verb, and in order to allow it to function as a verb what the translator has done is to reverse the order of transition to suit his own scheme from verbal noun back to verb. But the verb he wants to fit into his scheme is not one that predicates a subject, as a 'subject' is rather general; he wants a verb that predicates something more precise, a particular 'object' as distinguished from a 'subject'. He wants a verb that expresses an action having a direct object, e.g. God; an action acted upon by what is significantly called a transitive verb. It so happens as a matter of fact that the word *islām* is taken as a transitive verb meaning 'submission' (to God) in which religion is implied, and used as such in a recent and controversial translation of the Holy Qur'ān into English (2015, USA). We will deal with the problems raised by this translation, but in the meantime preliminary matters to attend to in our explanation that puts these problems in proper perspective as we go along will have to take precedence.

Since the period of the holy Prophet and the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, and later in the third and fourth centuries after the Hijrah, the consensus of grammarians and lexicologists, based on the evidence in the Qur'ān, established that the word *islām* prefixed with the determinative article *al* refers to the religion of Islām, not to the verbal noun of the verb *aslama*. Indeed, at the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed and the religion of Islām was in the process of being realized by the Holy Prophet under God's guidance, the very notion of the verb *aslama* in the sense meant by the Qur'ān, was not yet evident in the hearts and minds of the people, let alone its verbal noun. The verb *aslama* in the sense of the meaning and usage given to it in the Qur'ān was not known in the language of the Jāhiliyyah and that of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Similarly, the word *muslim* that is the consequent of *aslama*. As to the word *islām*, which only much later came to be known and understood as the verbal noun, i.e. *maşdar*, of the verb

*aslama*, it was entirely a new word in the language of the Arabs. The close conceptual relation between the words *aslama*, *muslim*, *islām*, came into historical existence only in the Qur'ān with the coming of Islām among the Arabs.

The fact that grammarians and lexicologists from the earliest periods of Islām till the present day indicated the function of the determinative article *al* in relation to the word *islām*, is precisely meant as a cautionary note to distinguish *islām* as a *name* that refers to a complete system of belief, faith, and worship, and not to understand and use it indiscriminately as a *word*, a figure of speech, a verb converted from a verbal noun, given to mean 'submission' in order to conform to the context of preconceived ideas expressed in grammatical terms of another language into which it is translated. From the time of the holy Prophet till the present day Muslims the world over have always understood *islām* as the name of the revealed religion brought by the holy Prophet Muḥammad, and that its meaning cannot be translated into another language by a single word like 'submission' as that would be a radical reduction in the meaning of the word *islām* and would render the very notion of religion to become ambiguous. But that is precisely what is intended by the translator. And this misleading ambiguity is now becoming evident. If this modern undesirable innovation is allowed to remain unchallenged, the status of Islām as a unique universal religion would become equalized with the status of religions generally, which is tantamount to reverting Islām to the status of a *millah* as one of the *adyān*.

In the earliest lexicon of the Arabic language compiled more than a century after the Hijrah, *al-islām*, i.e. *islām* as a word to be defined in a lexicon, is found listed under the root *salima* and explained that it means: *al-istislām li amri'Llāhi ta'ālā, wa huwa al-inqiyād li tā'atīhi, wa al-qubūl li amrihi*, i.e. 'al-islām is complete self-surrender to the Will of Allāh Most High, and it is compliance to submit in willing and humble submissiveness leading towards unconditional obedience to Him, and to accept and carry out His Command.' This concise explanation of the meaning underlying the word *islām*, when properly analysed and understood, is not just about 'submission', it is about *īmān* as the principle of the religion

named by that word, the religion that is the source of the standard of submission involving knowledge of who God is; of His Name *Allāh*, the Creator and Lord of all the Worlds and the focus on Whom attention and worship is concentrated; of law and the application of moral injunctions and legal ordinances that interpret the meaning of His Will; of the *adab* of right conduct and the practice of ethical virtues. And the 'submission' that is meant is to the One and only God and His rule that is expressed in the Qur'ān by the verb *aslama*.

*Aslama* in the grammatical sense of the word belongs to a class of verbs called an inchoative verb, i.e. a verb indicating the beginning of an action that is not intended to remain in the same state or condition. At the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed to the holy Prophet, it referred in the context of people who were not yet or in the process of being converted to Islām, that was then only begun, for the first time, not having been before. It was an action that was not lasting, that every time it happened, it was not a continuation of the preceding action, but a new one in a different state or condition. But in the Qur'ān where it refers only to religion, it was an action, (i.e. submitting to the Will of God) that needed to be a continuation of the preceding action, continuously repeated in compliance with guidance from religious law, i.e. *shara'*, consciously knowing and understanding its purpose, and progressively carried out to achieve the more lasting state of being a 'submitter', i.e. a *muslim*. Being a *muslim*, a 'submitter', means 'going on submitting' all the time under the guidance of the *sharī'ah*, over a lifelong period in such a way as to instill into the experience and consciousness of the one who truly submits, a knowledge, i.e. *ma'rīfah*, of the nature of God; of His creation of man in order to serve Him; of man's dual nature, i.e. *nafsān*; of his soul and his self; of belief and faith, i.e. *īmān* in God; of His guidance i.e. *hudā*; of man's probationary life on earth; of moral conduct and ethical virtues; of the Last Day; of Resurrection and Final Judgement. Thus *aslama*, according to the context in which it is used in the Qur'ān, does not cease in life, but ultimately leads to a maturing of the knowledge inculcated through its continued performance as a *muslim* and a *mu'min*, into a way of life organized as a worldview and realized as the religion called *al-Islām*.



It is an error leading to deviation to reduce the meaning underlying the word *islām* to a single word like 'submission'. Submission in the sense of inchoative *aslama* is indeed an important feature in the semantics of the word *islām*. But *islām* is the name of the religion and the religion means much more than 'submission'. It is an error of reasoning to consider as separate the name and the word and then to identify the word with the thing named. *Islām* is knowledge, i.e. *ma'rifah*, of Divine Unity, *al-tawḥīd*, formulated in definite and unambiguous terms in the first part of the *kalimah shahādah*, interpreted by the holy Prophet in the second part of the *kalimah* and permanently established by him with God's guidance as the religion of Truth in order to make true monotheism manifest over all religion. In this second part the holy Prophet also made the rites, the rules, and regulations and the laws that govern them that allow for the implementation of *aslama* as enjoined in the Qur'ān in the form of the daily prescribed prayers, the alms tax, the fast of Ramaḍān, and the pilgrimage to Makkah. All these involve knowledge, both as *ma'rifah* and as *ilm*, and action, *amal*, physically and spiritually, as well as intellectual verification, moral conduct and the practice of ethical virtues externally and internally.

The essential quality of this religion is the *kalimah shahādah*, the statement of witnessing, which is to bear witness expressed in words by the tongue and verified in the heart and mind and the bodily faculties, that "there is no God but Allāh and that Muḥammad is Messenger of Allāh": *Lā ilāha illa'LLāh, Muḥammadun rasūlu'LLāh*. It is formulated in two inseparable parts forming a unity that epitomizes the religion of Islām. The first part, i.e. *Lā ilāha illa'LLāh*, is the denial, *naḥy*, of any other God, i.e. a partner, rival, or equal, a *sharīk*, beside the True and Real God, followed by the affirmation, *ithbāt*, that the True and Real God is Allāh; the second part, i.e. *Muḥammadun rasūlu'LLāh*, is the recognition and acknowledgement of Muḥammad as Messenger of Allāh who made manifest the formula of Allāh's Oneness mentioned in the first part, and established the revealed religion as an institution complete with the Divine Law as the religion of Truth. The first part is a reaffirmation, here in this temporal world of sense and

sensible experience, of the original Covenant the soul of man had sealed with God in the nontemporal world of spiritual entities; the second part is a confirmation of the decisive role of Muḥammad in bringing about the fulfillment of the obligation implied in that Covenant as well as in the Covenant of the Prophets. This obligation is what religion is all about.

Submission in the sense of the Qur'ānic *aslama*, is indeed one of the fundamental principles of the law of God, i.e. the *fiṭrah*. In the Holy Qur'ān, God mentions that all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, submitted to His Will (*Āli Imrān* (3): 83). This means that all creatures that have submitted to His Will have been created with a volition, a power or freedom of will or intention to decide upon a choice of action described as 'willing' or 'unwilling'. The *jinn* and *insān*, however, have been created for the purpose of serving God (*Al-Dhāriyāt* (51): 56). This means that they have been created with a knowledge of duty, responsibility, and a sense of judgement and a freedom of will or intention to decide upon a choice of action that is not done by other creatures; and that is 'unwilling' submission. Therefore it is only among the *jinn* and *insān* that unwilling submission is made possible. Our concern here is only with *insān* and the way in which perhaps most of them have submitted unwillingly. This is indicated in the following *āyah* which is most significant to our present discourse: "Do they seek for other than the religion of God? – while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, submitted to His Will, and to Him will they all be brought back." (3:83). In this *āyah*, the 'seeking for' which they do, expressed by the verb *yabghūna*, from the root *baghā*, a word which in this case implies that their seeking has gone beyond the limit of truth. This going beyond the limit of truth is their desire for a religion in which to submit that is 'other', *ghayra*, than the religion of God, i.e. the religion favoured by God. The word *ghayr* basically means to make a thing other than what it was; to make a thing cease to have the quality which it had, to alter the state of a thing, and usually in this and other cases, to change and corrupt a thing (e.g. *Al-Anfāl* (8): 53; *Al-Ra'd* (13): 11). The 'religion favoured by God', the *dīni'LLāh*, refers initially before Islām to the 'upright religion', the *dīnan qayyiman* evolved from the

*millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm, followed by that from the *millah* of each of the major Prophets after him, and finally completed in the *millah* of the Prophet Muḥammad where it was transformed into the religion of Islām, the religion of Truth, *dīn al-ḥaqq*, brought by the Holy Prophet and Messenger Muḥammad (*Al-Tawbah* (9): 33; *Al-Fath* (48): 28; *Al-Ṣaff* (61): 9). Indeed, the religion favoured by God referred to here is the religion of Islām, as He says in another *āyah*: “The true religion in God’s estimation is *al-Islām*” (*Āli Imrān* (3): 19).

Since all creatures willingly, *taw‘an*, or unwillingly, *karhan*, have submitted to the Will of God, they who seek for ‘other’ than the religion of God know that they cannot avoid submission to God. But they can alter the form of submission by submitting in a form to suit their own way. They can do this only when they no longer belong to the religion of God. In our interpretation of this *āyah* 3:83, and according to the Qur’ānic context, unwilling submission can only refer to religions, *adyān*, other than the religion of Islām. The term *karhan*, from *kariha*, *karh*, in this *āyah* does not mean just a hesitancy to obey, a not-in-the-mood stance delaying to do what God has commanded. But more than that, *karhan* springs from a medley of emotions such as disgust, loathe, malice, abhorrence, ill-will and other feelings of abomination that spring from envy and that combine to become implacable hate. Hatred is the well-spring of unwilling submission. That is why they seek for ‘other’ than the religion of God. What they hate is the *kalimah shahādah* which confirmed the truth in the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm who affirmed God’s Oneness and denied polytheism, and which confirmed the Prophet Muḥammad’s decisive role in manifesting the Unity of God and in realizing the revealed religion as a universal religion.

Unwilling submission betrays arrogance, disobedience, rebellion, and is tantamount to misbelief, which is one of the forms of unbelief, *kufṛ*. Unwilling submission is not the mark of true belief, and a *kāfir* might therefore be one who though professing belief in God yet does not submit willingly in true submission following the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm and all sent Prophets but prefers instead to submit in his own way; a way, or manner, or

form, i.e. a *millah*, neither approved, nor revealed, nor commanded by God. True and real submission is that which has been perfected by the holy Prophet as a model for mankind, for that is the manner of submission of all the Prophets and Messengers sent before him, and the form approved, revealed and commanded by God. Submission in this way confirms and affirms the belief to be true and genuine. And it is submission in this way that is meant by the verb *aslama* in the Qur’ān.

To make religion, a *dīn*, that has evolved from a *millah* of a Prophet, ‘other’ i.e. *ghayr*, than what it was, to make it cease to have the quality which it had, to alter its state, and to change and corrupt it, could only be done from within the religion itself. The perpetrators would be among the early adherents in a *millah* of a Prophet who submit unwillingly and regard the articles of belief or creed with hostility. It would be impossible for them to corrupt such a religion if it were already mature as a *dīn* and established as an institution. The only way for them to do so would be to begin conspiring from the very beginning when the religion was still in its initial stages of evolvment i.e. as a *millah*, before it could grow and establish itself into an institution, a *dīn*. They would begin by posing questions to raise doubts about the origin of the creed. They would argue and demand that the truths conveyed in the creed be proven as genuine before they can be accepted. They would confuse the credulous to vacillate between belief and unbelief. As history unfolds, they would insert interpolations into the creed and introduce their own interpretations of the creed so that the religion would gradually cease to have the quality which it had. They would change the conception of a universal God into a tribal, or a racial, and a national God. They would make the name i.e. Allāh, of the True and Real God, conveyed by all the Prophets to their peoples, to be forgotten and replace it with their own inventions, or dispense with it altogether and have a God without a name. They would devise their own forms of worship and compose their prayers in their own relatively recent languages and not in the original languages revealed to their Prophets. They would debate among themselves differences on fundamental matters of doctrine that arise due to historical circumstances. They would assemble their authorities on



*millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm, followed by that from the *millah* of each of the major Prophets after him, and finally completed in the *millah* of the Prophet Muḥammad where it was transformed into the religion of Islām, the religion of Truth, *dīn al-ḥaqq*, brought by the Holy Prophet and Messenger Muḥammad (*Al-Tawbah* (9): 33; *Al-Fath* (48): 28; *Al-Ṣaff* (61): 9). Indeed, the religion favoured by God referred to here is the religion of Islām, as He says in another *āyah*: “The true religion in God’s estimation is *al-Islām*” (*Āli ‘Imrān* (3): 19).

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religious policy to convene decisive conventions to finally resolve these differences and purge dissenters from the community. All these historical acts of ingenious institutionalization of the *millah* into a *dīn*, a religion, would take them through hundreds of years to accomplish their purpose to make the religion 'other' than what it was. What is meant by the expression 'other than what it was', according to the meaning intended by the word *ghayra* in this context, is that the religion that has now become 'other' is still the same one that had evolved from the *millah* of a Prophet, and not a new one from a different *millah*. Only that it has become 'other' due to its being a corrupted version of that which was originally a *dīn* preached by a Prophet. In this sense therefore, the religion that they evolved from the *millah* of a Prophet did not become a *dīn*, but remain always a *millah*. We see this happened historically, for example, in the rise of Judaism and Christianity. And in the Holy Qur'ān God refers to them as *millah*, not as *dīn* (*Al-Baqarah* (2):120).

This was how since antiquity, from the time of the Prophet Nūḥ to that of the Prophet Ibrāhīm, then Mūsā, then 'Īsā, and other Prophets in the Near East and elsewhere, religions other than that revealed by God through His Prophets had come into existence. The Prophets, each according to the ambience of their time and in their own languages did convey to their peoples God's message and His commands and prohibitions. They conveyed that the True and Real God is Allāh, the Lord of all the Worlds unto Whom alone is worship due. But their peoples were unwilling to submit to Him according to the way of the *millah* of the Prophets. They forgot Allāh and substituted other names for their Gods and invented their own systems of belief and worship and developed them into institutions that become religions, *adyān*, 'other' than that of God.

Belief is the affirmation in the heart and mind of faith in the True and Real God, which is the essence itself of religion and is verified in the psychological aspect of the worship of that God. In the *sūrah* of the Qur'ān about those who deny the truth, the people of the *adyān*, i.e. *Al-Kāfirūn* (109): 1- 6, God tells the holy Prophet and everyone who follows him to "Say: O, you people who deny the truth! I do not (in my heart and mind) worship what you worship,

Nor do you (in your hearts and minds) worship what I worship; And I am not (in my religion) a worshipper of what you worship, Nor are you (in your religion) worshippers of what I worship. To you be your religion, and to me mine".

Our straightforward paraphrase of this important early Makkan *sūrah* is to point out its intended meaning as really meant to apply to a futurity, such as for example in our time, when the religion of God is being talked about in a global act of human intervention to revert its status to that of a *millah* in conformity with the rest of the *adyān*. In the *sūrah* cited above we notice that the word for religion, *dīn*, referring to the religion of those who deny the truth is in the singular, and not in the plural; our explanation for this is because the religions of those who deny the truth are as a single *millah* in their *kufr*.

What is *dīn*? It is religion that was revealed by God to His Prophets and Messengers, and not religion that was the product of human intervention. It is tradition, *'ādah*, that goes back to all the original *millah* of all the Prophets and Messengers of God. It is a way of life, *sīrah*, lived in accordance with that tradition. It is law, *shara'*, *shan'ah*, and *ḥukm*, the practical application of the moral and legal principles and ordinances of the religion. It is judgement, *qadā'*, and reckoning, *ḥisāb*, and requital, *kasb*. It is guidance, *hudā*, along the Straight Path, *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*. It is unconditional obedience, *tā'ah*, and humble submissiveness, *inqiyād*. It is satisfaction and contentment, *jazā'*. It is a spiritual or mental state of being or a state of historical circumstance, *ḥāl*. It is serving God with humility and submissiveness in what He approves, *'ibādah*. It is the Statement of Witnessing, the *kalimah shahādah*, that there is no True and Real God Who is the focus of worship but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is Messenger of Allāh. It is a trust that God puts in the soul to have faith in Him, *īmān*, and to believe in His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and the Divine Decree of good and bad. It is the internal verification, *taṣdīq bāṭin* in the heart, *qalb*. And it is also the prescribed prayers, *ṣalāt*, the alms tax, *zakāt*, the fast of Ramaḍān, *ṣawm*, and the pilgrimage to Makkah, *ḥajj al-bayt*. It is the external verification, *taṣdīq zāhir* by the tongue, *lisān*, and the bodily members, *arkān*. It is consciousness of God in the sensitive



imagination or in the rational imagination, *iḥsān*. It is created disposition, *qadar*, and individual intention, *niyyah*, to decide upon an action, *ʿamal*, positively or negatively. It is to submit, *aslama*, to the Will of God willingly, *ṭawʿan*, or unwillingly, *karhan*. There is contrariness in religion which in Islām is not considered to be a constituent part of the religion, such as rebellion, *ʿiṣyān*, making a partner, a rival, or an equal with God and His rule, *shirk*, atheism, *dahriyyah*, deviant belief, aberration, *ilhād*. It is the heart and mind being covered from the Truth resulting in unbelief, or rejection of the Truth, *kufṛ*. This contrariness in *dīn* is really a symptom of the phenomenon of human intervention of revealed religion. *Dīn* is a science and art of government, *siyāsah*, and it is also judicious administration of the concerns and resources of the Community, *iqtisād*. *Dīn* is all these taken together except the contraries. It is belief and devotion, *iḥiqād* and works, *aʿmāl*, including details from the sciences derived from it such as jurisprudence, *fiqh*, theology, *kalām*, metaphysics, *taṣawwuf*, philosophy, *ḥikmah*, and ethics, *akhlāq*. It is an inseparable combination of external verification, *islām*, internal verification, *īmān*, and consciousness of God's Presence, *iḥsān*. It is ISLĀM.

The word *islām* in the linguistic and legal sense of the term, refers to an external act of obedience to religious law, i.e. *sharaʿ*. The same word *islām*, in the religious sense of the term, which includes the linguistic and legal sense, refers to an established institution of belief, faith, and worship, i.e. *dīn*, identified as the religion of Islām. Thus the word *islām* refers to an external act of obedience to religious law as well as to an internal act of belief, faith, and worship in compliance with God's commands and prohibitions revealed in the Holy Qurʾān and in the Tradition, i.e. *sunnah*, of the Holy Prophet constituting the Divine Law, i.e. the *sharīʿah*.

Even though it is understood from the well known *āyah* in the Holy Qurʾān (*al-Ḥujurāt* (49):14) that *islām* in the semantic sense of the term, is not the same as *īmān*, yet it is implied in the same *āyah* that the two terms are intimately associated in mutual relationship such that the one cannot do without the other. This is because *islām* verifies *īmān* just as *īmān* verifies *islām*; *islām* without

*īmān* or *īmān* without *islām* is not found. So they are an inseparable unity just as the first part of the *kalimah shahādah* is inseparable from the second part as we have shown in a previous paragraph. The very definition of *īmān* makes this inseparability clear. *īmān* was originally defined as: *maʿrifah biʾl-qalb wa qawl biʾl-lisān wa ʿamal biʾl-arkān*, later rephrased as: *iḥiqād biʾl-qalb wa iqrār biʾl-lisān wa ʿamal biʾl-arkān*: firm belief in the heart, confirmed by the tongue, and worked by members of the body.

This inseparable unity of *islām-īmān* implies consciousness of God and remembrance of Him that brings about a condition of tranquility, *ṭumaʾnīnah*, in the soul; it is freedom from worry resulting from doubt; freedom from disquietude, *ḥamm*, and fear, *khawf*, that refers to ultimate destiny; it is inward security that comes about when the soul is submissive to God; being submissive to God is freedom which causes to arise in the soul the consciousness of peace called *islām*. Indeed, the dominant meaning of *islām* is *peace* rather than *submission*. These inner activities of the soul imply prior consciousness in the soul of the Truth that comes from Divine guidance, and this consciousness is that of certainty, *yaqīn*, of the Truth.

In the past Muslim scholars of Islām and writers of great commentaries, writing in Arabic, were obviously aware that the word *islām* cannot be taken to mean only in the linguistic sense of the term, separate from *īmān*, as a verbal noun of the verb *aslama*. Considering the fact that they were writing in Arabic they were not faced with the problem of translating the word *islām* into another word from a different language. Even in Arabic they would invariably use at least two words such as *ṭāʿah* and *inqiyād* as an explanation of the basic meaning of *islām* to express the verbal notion of a submissiveness that characterizes the religion of Islām. These two words convey meanings of compliance and humble willingness to be led or guided towards unconditional obedience to God that mean much more than mere 'submission'. Even so they would of course have understood that the full meaning of the word *islām* cannot be encompassed by another Arabic word or a word from another language – it is untranslatable because it expresses a worldview.

The legalists among the 'ulamā' concurred with the view that the word *islām* cannot be taken to mean only in the linguistic sense of the term. They conceded that *islām* does indeed mean submission in the sense of *ṭā'ah* and *inqiyād*, but added further that as a manifestation of religion *Islām* is an external affair, meaning that *Islām* consists of external acts of obedience to religious law, i.e. *al-a'māl al-zāhirah*. They were of course looking at the problem from the linguistic and legal point of view. When looked at from this point of view religion would indeed appear as an external affair because language and law combined are the necessary disciplines instrumental in making observable the practice of religion. Obviously, for religion to *be* religion its practice must be observable, otherwise it is not religion. It must be observable so that the correct application of the practice and implementation of the rules and regulations of the law can be seen to be complied with by all members of the Community in every generation throughout the ages. By stressing that *Islām* is an external affair, we take it for granted that the legalists did not mean that *Islām*, in contrast with *dīn*, is only ritual, whereas *dīn* is wider in scope: it is a way of life. In contrasting *Islām* with *dīn* we assume that they did not really mean to separate *Islām* from *dīn* because as emphasized in the Holy Qur'ān *Islām* is not only the name of the *dīn*, but is also the very *dīn* itself. Indeed it is not possible to actually separate *Islām* from *dīn* except in the mind analytically. But the legalist among the 'ulamā' were incorrect when they defined *Islām* as an external affair, *al-a'māl al-zāhirah*. They were incorrect because they restricted their definition to the combined linguistic and legal point of view and stressed only this point of view. *Islām* does not consist only of external acts of obedience to religious law; it includes *īmān* and *ihsān* as an inseparable unity defining itself as religion, *dīn*, as a whole. The proof of this is the *ḥādith* Jibril where the holy Prophet, in answering the question of the Angel about *Islām*, mentions first that *Islām* is to bear witness that there is no God but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is Messenger of Allāh. The first part of this *kalimah shahādah* is not referring to external acts. It refers to the antecedent state of *āmana*. The second part refers to the consequent state of *aslama*, and does indeed appear to refer to external acts such as

the prescribed prayers, the alms tax, the fast of Ramaḍān, and the pilgrimage to Makkah. But even these are the result of the first part, and cannot be conceived as being totally devoid of its presence in our consciousness, so that they are not external acts, but are both external as well as internal acts just as inseparable as the first and second parts of the *kalimah shahādah*. Moreover, the second part alludes to the decisive role of the holy Prophet in bringing about the definite formulation of *tawḥīd* and its expression in *aslama* and the establishment of *Islām* as a complete institution of belief, faith, and worship as well as the complete Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān. This has to do with knowledge, faith, and understanding in the heart and mind, of Allāh, of His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, the Divine Decree of good and bad; and the worship of Allāh in humble submissiveness as if you saw Him (in your sensitive imagination), and if you do not see Him, He sees you (in your rational imagination) making you conscious of His Presence. As to *Islām* being the religion consisting of an inseparable unity of *islām-īmān-ihsān*, the holy Prophet, after answering the Angel's question about these three, remarked to his Companions: "That is Jibril, he is teaching you about *your religion*", i.e. *Islām*.

The trend of translating into English the word *islām* as 'submission', the verbal noun of the verb *aslama*, began when translations of the Holy Qur'ān into English by Muslims with commentaries appeared in the beginning of the 20th century. It was usually the case with the translators that in relevant instances where the word *islām* occurs in the Qur'ānic text to denote not only the name but the religion itself of *Islām*, they would insert within brackets after the word *islām*, some such phrase as: (submission to the Will of God) by way of abridged explanation of the meaning of the name and the religion of *Islām*. However, they were not inclined to remove, from the texts of their translations, the name *Islām* and substitute it with a single word, 'submission'. Then, by the end of the 20th century, when the effects of secularization as a philosophical program had insinuated itself into the thinking of Muslim scholars and academics, we find for the first time in an influential translation



and commentary of the Holy Qur'ān into English (1980, Gib) the complete removal from the text of the translation the name *Islām* substituted by the phrase: 'self surrender unto God'. By the beginning of the 21st century, not to be outdone, the removal of the name *Islām* and its substitution by the word 'submission', appeared in a highly promoted new translation and commentary of the Holy Qur'ān into English (2015, USA). We ask: is it necessary in the art of translation to translate the name of a religion and identify the religion itself with the translation? The name of *Islām* is a term of reference pertaining to the religion brought by the holy Prophet Muḥammad and not to any other religion. Removing it from the texts of the translations and substituting it with a word like 'self surrender' or simply 'submission' amounts to removing the term of reference pertaining specifically to the religion of *Islām* so that it could refer to *any* religion. But this is precisely their intention, and to support it they had to invent the idea that the word *islām* existed historically, before being revealed in the Qur'ān. In the text of this most recent translation, the word *islām* is removed and substituted with the word 'submission' in all instances where they occur in the text of the Qur'ān. However, in the *āyah* which refers to *islām* as the name chosen by God for the religion brought by the Last Prophet Muḥammad, *Al-Mā'idah* (5): 3, the word 'submission' is printed with the initial letter in capital: 'Submission', presumably as a textual device to hint at the universality of the religion brought by the Prophet Muḥammad being given the name *Islām*, i.e. 'submission', not because of the religion itself being universal, but because submission characterizes the nature of all religions. Submission is regarded as a universal concept common to all religions. That is why in two other *āyahs* relevant to the case, i.e. *Āli Imrān* (3): 19 and (3): 85, which we assert refer to the universal religion of *Islām*, the initial letter of the word 'Submission' is there printed in the lower case: 'submission'. Obviously, the translator intends that these two *āyahs* refer not only to *Islām*, but generally to all presumably monotheistic religion. Our criticism in this case is concerned mainly with the texts of the translations because the translations can be taken out and used separately from their commentaries. But in this case where it pertains to the words *islām*

and *muslim*, even the commentaries create the impression that there is no originality in the religion brought by Muḥammad and that the use of the words *islām* and *muslim* in the Qur'ān has a more general and universal meaning that refers not only to the religion of *Islām* but to all true monotheistic religion. But other than *Islām* are there any *true* monotheistic religion? Indeed, of the more general and universal meaning in the use of the words *islām* and *muslim* in the Qur'ān, we have always been aware of that without implying that they could refer to any religion other than that which affirms One God asserting that He is the only God, without partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule i.e. *Islām*. Before *Islām* was revealed, the word *muslim* in the Qur'ān is assumed to refer to the followers of the *millah* of the Prophets. The *millah* of all the Prophets, including the rites, the rules and regulations, and later the laws, that gradually evolved from antiquity according to God's plan, was the religion brought by different Prophets in different languages and periods of time in various milieu among generations of believers in their respective states of life. The core of this religion was the belief and faith in One God and the assertion that He is the only God without partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule. This core is the root of true monotheism. If occasionally the word *muslim* in the Qur'ān refers to the Jews and the Christians among the People of the Book, it refers to *individuals* personally and in groups who in their own way practiced true monotheism, not collectively, as a community belonging to their formal religion of Judaism or Christianity. Their formal religion is not considered in the Qur'ān to be true monotheism because of their worship of a God as supreme combined with the implicit (Judaism) and explicit (Christianity) admission of other Gods; of their belief in one God without asserting that He is the only God. It is this *henotheism* involved in their religion that disqualifies their religion from being a *true* monotheistic religion.

It has often been stated by some Muslim scholars including the translators of the Qur'ān into English, what is now generally taken for granted as true, that the word *islām* is old, ancient; that it has been in existence historically before being revealed in the Holy Qur'ān. We consider this belief that the word *islām* is old,

going back to antiquity, needs to be qualified in what way is *islām* “old”, and if so, is it really *islām* that is “old”? It is revealed in the Qur’ān that all Prophets and Messengers of God in their respective *millah* and their various milieu were referred to as *muslim* when the religion of Islām as an established institution of belief, faith, and worship was not yet a realized event. Linguistically, the term *muslim* is a consequent of the inchoative verb *aslama* whose verbal noun is *islām*. Since all Prophets and Messengers of God and their genuine followers in their various milieu are referred to in the Qur’ān as *muslim* long before Islām itself was revealed, and because the term *muslim* implies *islām*, the verbal noun of *aslama*, it was therefore presupposed as a matter of grammatical implication that their religion must have been called *islām*. But this presupposition is not valid; as a matter of fact *islām* itself was merely implied in the word *muslim* and was then not yet realized as a religion, and in this case the use of the term *muslim* for them in the Qur’ān is because of their true monotheism *ḥanifiyyah* conveyed in the *core* of the religion of their *millah*. Their obedience to what God had enjoined with respect to the fulfillment of the obligation conveyed in the core of their religion was the reason for their being referred to as *muslim*. The religion of the *millah* of all the Prophets earlier than the Last was not called ‘*islām*’. The Qur’ān refers to their religion as *dīnan qayyiman*: ‘an upright religion’ in emulation of the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm who initiated the promulgation of that core.

Religion (*dīn*) in its original conception as an ideal reality (*ma’nā*) in the cognitive presence of God in the degree of His Oneness (*al-waḥdah*) was meant by God to realize its purpose here on earth in the visible world of sense and sensible experience (*‘ālam al-shahādah*). From this antecedent state in the degree of His Oneness, He caused it to become manifest as a distinct reality (*ḥaqīqah al-shay’*) in the next stage of its realization in the degree of His Unity (*al-wāḥidiyyah*), where the primordial Covenant (*mīthāq*) took place between the human souls and God acknowledging His Lordship over them. This was the *shahādah rabbaniyyah*. Then, as a distinct reality that He conceived would be realized on earth as religion, He made it into a *core* that would be the fundamental basis of the universal religion. The substance of this core He fashioned

into a *formula*, and the formula He would reveal on earth through the *millah* of His Last Prophet, defined in a set form of His words, concise yet comprehensive and unambiguous, i.e. *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, which the Last Prophet would make manifest and interpret as the Formula of Unity (*kalimah al-tawḥīd*). At this consequent state of the evolvement of religion in His cognitive presence towards realization of its purpose in the world of sense and sensible experience, where the human souls were about to be made subject to the limitations of humanity (*insāniyyah*) and the material universe, God caused His Divinity (*al-ilāhiyyah*) to arise, so that when the human souls become originated by Him as human beings (*insān*) here on earth they would be obligated to acknowledge Him as the True and Real God (*ilāh*) Who is the only God. Religion was now complete and ready to be revealed to human beings here on earth.

The purpose of religion was to test the loyalty of the human souls to God their Lord (*rabb*), about whose Lordship they had borne witness to in their *shahādah rabbaniyyah* of the Covenant with Him in the invisible world (*‘ālam al-ghayb*) of spiritual entities; as well as to test whether as human beings (*insān*) here on earth in the visible world (*‘ālam al-shahādah*) of sense and sensible experience they would verify and confirm in their selves their *shahādah rabbaniyyah* by a *shahādah ilāhiyyah* that there is no God (*ilāh*) but Allāh, the One and only God (*waḥdah*) without any partner, rival, or equal with Him (*lā sharīkahu*) and His rule (*lahu al-mulk*). Religion would be the supreme Test of genuineness of belief, faith, and worship of the One True and Real God Who would Himself sit in Judgement on the day aptly called the Day of Religion (*yawm al-dīn*).

When we consider the length of time extended from the period of the Prophet Nūḥ to that of the Prophet ‘Īsā, and the different ages and levels of civilization into which the Prophets within that extent of time were sent to their peoples, it becomes obvious that due to the vicissitudes of life determined by the course of events in accordance with God’s plan, the *form* of religion of the *millah* of each of the Prophets, i.e. the rites, the rules and regulations, and the laws that governed them, was not the same. What was the same in the form of their religion was the *core* of the religion. The mission of the Prophets was to their own peoples conveyed in



their own languages and the form of religion of their *millah* was meant only for them. The religion of the Prophets from the time of Nūḥ, then from that of Ibrāhīm, then from that of Mūsā, and then from that of ʿĪsā was only to carry out what God had enjoined, *waṣṣā*, i.e. instructed them to do by way of suggestion, advice, and guidance, to form an upright religion for their own people in order to realize the obligatory legal and moral injunctions contained in the core of their religion and to ensure that the substance of the core remained the same throughout the ages. They preached and conveyed to their peoples in their respective languages what God had instructed them to do, and for every one of them He introduced laws, *shirʿah*, suited to their ways of life, *minḥāja*, (*Al-Māʾidah* (5):48), in accordance with historical circumstances and their spiritual and mental states of being, *aḥwāl*.

Islām that was in the cognitive presence of God was lodged in the formula that was the *substance* of the core of religion, *dīn*, and religion from the very beginning of Revelation was revealed to the Prophets in stages of formation and completion according to prevailing historical circumstance and the time and place in which the Prophets lived. Since the time of Nūḥ between 5000 and 6000 years ago, religion was revealed initially in a rudimentary form which was gradually evolved through the *millah* of all the Prophets beginning with the *millah* of Ibrāhīm as an 'upright religion', i.e. *dīnan qayyiman*. From the *millah* of Ibrāhīm its evolvement was continued progressively through the *millah* of Mūsā, followed by other Prophets, then through the *millah* of ʿĪsā in complementary stages of completion from *millah* to *millah*, the religion taking diverse forms while the substance of the core remained the same, maintaining unity of belief and faith in a diversity of forms until it reached the final stage of evolvement in the *millah* of Muḥammad, where it was transformed into the universal religion of Islām.

It has taken more than 5000 years for the religion of Islām to be realized in accordance with God's plan which we interpret by inference from what was revealed in the Holy Qur'ān. It is an error to say that the word *islām* has been in historical existence before being revealed in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān was new, and the word *islām* which is the name of the religion of Islām was new, not

"old". So what is it about the word *islām* that can be considered as "old", since there is something about the religion of the *millah* of the earlier Prophets that is revealed in the Qur'ān to be the same in substance as *islām*? It is the *core* of their religion that is the same in substance as *islām* not their *religion*. It is the core that is "old". And even the core of the religion, throughout its evolvement through the *millah* of all the earlier Prophets for thousands of years, was then not yet defined in a set form of words as the formula: *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. This definition of true monotheism is found in the Qur'ān only in relation to the holy Prophet Muḥammad, *Al-Ṣaffāt* (37): 35; *Muḥammad* (47): 19. It is significant that *sūrah* 47 is named after him, for it is in this *sūrah* that *lā ilāha illā Allāh* is first mentioned in the Qur'ān, and it refers to Muḥammad who made manifest, *al-muḥir*, the Formula of Unity, *kalimah al-Tawḥīd*.

In the roman and italic letters, in written form or in print, one can for a specific purpose distinguish what one means by writing or printing the same initial letter in a different size and shape, for example in capital: Islām, or in the lower case: islām. This is done to show that, in this case, the former refers to the *name* of the religion as well as to the *religion* itself of Islām, and the latter refers to either the *word* denoting the religion of Islām, or to the *verbal noun* expressing the infinitive mood of the verb. As to the meaning of the word *islām*, it is: submitting to the One and only God defined in accordance with Arabic usage in the Qur'ān as the external and internal act of obedience to God's commands and prohibitions revealed in the Qur'ān and in the Tradition, or *sunnah*, of the holy Prophet constituting the Divine Law, i.e. the *shariʿah*.

*Islām* is the name of the universal religion revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad who was sent as the universal Messenger to mankind. The word *islām* as such came into historical existence only in the Holy Qur'ān when it was revealed to the holy Prophet. In the Qur'ān, *islām* is found mentioned only eight times altogether in different *sūrahs* where it refers to the religion. The first step leading to error and deviation in understanding the nature of the religion of Islām, is the radical reduction of the meaning of *islām* as verified in the experience and consciousness of Muslims,

from a complete system of belief, faith, and worship forming a worldview to a grammatical entity in the form of a verb expressing an action having a direct object, a transitive verb. Since religion is involved, the transitive verb is chosen because its action refers to a direct object, which in this case is assumed to be God, with religion implied. To put into effect this reduction, the word *islām* in all the eight instances in which it is found in the Qur'ān is simply converted in translation into a transitive verb meaning 'submission' in a general sense. Then the word *islām* is removed from the translated text of the *āyahs* concerned and substituted with the word 'submission'. This substitute is then slipped into the text of the whole translation of the Qur'ān, letting the text of the Qur'ān give contexture to it as the translation takes its pace. The next step is to claim that the word *islām* existed historically before being revealed in the Qur'ān. This claim is based on the assumption that the word *muslim*, according to the grammatical structure of the Arabic language and its orthography, already contained in substance the word *islām* though not actually expressed. It is taken for granted that the Qur'ān refers to all Prophets of God earlier than the Prophet Muḥammad as being *muslim*, showing that the word *islām* must have existed in the past going back to antiquity referring to their respective religion. Thus what the translator wants to impress upon our understanding is that religions called *islām* existed before the religion of the Prophet Muḥammad. The religion of the Prophet Muḥammad was only one of the religions called by that name. The law governing the rites, the rules and regulations in every one of these religions was formulated to suit the way of life of the people and was therefore not the same; but what was the same was its being *muslim* in *islām*, i.e. submission to God: the word *islām* translated as a transitive verb. The idea of submission to God is not originally found in the verb, but is put there to fit into the assumed meaning of the word *islām* in the Qur'ān. The reduction of the word *islām* in the Qur'ān to a transitive verb is therefore a purposive initial step leading to the claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān. Note well this claim, for it is tantamount to denying the truth confirmed by the Qur'ān that the Prophet Muḥammad, unlike earlier Prophets, was sent by

God as the universal Messenger to mankind. From this denial, the casting of doubt follows about the genuine uniqueness confirmed by history of the universality of the religion brought by the Prophet Muḥammad.

As to the claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān, we ask a simple question: Where did the word *islām* exist before being revealed in the Qur'ān? Was it in ancient Arabia? According to the Qur'ān ancient Prophets of Arabian tradition were sent to preach repentance to their own people, like the Prophets Hūd to the people of 'Ād, and Ṣāliḥ to the people of Thamūd, and Shu'ayb to the people of Madyān. But there is no evidence in the Qur'ān to show that the word *islām* existed with reference to them. Or was it perhaps in the relatively recent Arabia of the Jāhiliyyah period just a few hundred years before and up to the period of the Prophet Muḥammad? There at least, according to the researches of the orientalists and semanticists, the word *aslama* and perhaps also its participle the word *muslim* existed in the poetry of the Jāhiliyyah famously known as the Suspended Odes, the *Mu'allaqāt*. However it may be, we doubt that the words *aslama* and *muslim* existed in the pre-Islamic language of the Arabs; and that if as a mere supposition they did their basic and relational meaning, their usage and contexture, even their orthography, would not be the same as those of the words *aslama* and *muslim* found in the Qur'ān. We discover that in the Qur'ān, and nowhere else, the word *aslama* is not just an ordinary verb; it is an *inchoative* verb of a special and unique kind; and the word *muslim* is not really a participle of the verb *aslama*, but is really a *consequent* of the inchoative verb *aslama*. This is so because their basic and relational meaning, their usage and contexture in the Qur'ān pertain only to religion.

We said the claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān is based on the assumption that grammatically the word *muslim* already contained in substance the word *islām* though not actually expressed. But the existence of the word *islām* being already implied in the word *muslim* does not mean that it *must* actually exist. It could remain in the state of being implied without actual existence, or it could not at all be implied. Our finding, based on our perusal of the Arabic text of the *Mu'allaqāt*,



is that there is sufficient evidence to show that the word *muslim*, if indeed found in the language of the Jāhiliyyah and in that of the pre-Islamic Arabs, could not at all imply the existence of the word *islām*. How could it when the word *muslim* as allegedly found in the language of the Jāhiliyyah was never used in the context of religion and no Prophet was sent to them? But the most definitive evidence to show that it was *impossible* for the word *islām* to be implied in their word, supposedly assumed, *muslim* is our original discovery of the meaning of the verb *aslama* as inchoative only in the Qur'ān and that it is not found in the pre-Islamic Arabic and in any other language as well. Only in the Qur'ān is the inchoativeness of the verb *aslama* perpetuated by continuous repetition under guidance of the Law in order to attain to the state of being *muslim* preceded by being *mu'min*. Nowhere else but in the Holy Qur'ān interpreted by the Prophet Muḥammad into a consummate religion forming a worldview that the inchoativeness of *aslama* is perpetuated in the *sharī'ah* that he brought. This interpretation of the 'inchoativeness' of *aslama* as an inchoative verb found only in the Qur'ān, is based upon our original research on the true meaning and function of *aslama* in the Qur'ān and in the religion of Islām. It is therefore a new contribution to knowledge of Islām and the Arabic language of the Qur'ān. If our interpretation of *aslama* in the context of our reasoning in the present discourse is understood, then it will become obvious to the understanding that it is futile to search for the possibility of the word *islām* being found to exist in Arabia before being revealed in the Qur'ān.

So, in answer to our question: where did the word *islām* exist before being revealed in the Qur'ān?, those responsible for making such a claim will have to search elsewhere where some Prophet from among the earliest mentioned in the Qur'ān could be found who first used the words *aslama* and *muslim* and whose religion could be identified as *islām*. Then where could this Prophet be found? It is believed that Chaldea in Babylonia was where the Prophet Ibrāhīm was born about 4500 years ago. In him is found the ancient Prophet whose religion, according to them, could be identified as *islām*, thus verifying their claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān. But from what is

indicated in the Qur'ān the religion of the Prophet Ibrāhīm took a lifetime to evolve into its final form. In order for it to be identified as *islām* we have to investigate and interpret the series of significant events in his life from the time when he was a young man to the time when he attained to old age. These events took place in his experience and consciousness before as well as during and after his migration to Canaan. In his experience and consciousness we discern two stages which we call the *antecedent* state of his cognition, and that which followed in accordance with God's plan which we call the *consequent* state of his cognition.

As to the religion of the Prophet Ibrāhīm the initial stage of his antecedent state of cognition was when he was led by God to utter: "As for me, I set my face resolutely towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and as a true monotheist, *ḥanīfan*, I sincerely affirm belief in One and only God, and I am not of those who make partners unto Him", i.e. *mushrikīn*. At this stage words like *amana*, *aslama*, and *muslim* were not yet evident in the Prophet Ibrāhīm's state of cognition. That would come much later, sometime during and after his migration to Canaan. It was in the beginning of his antecedent state of cognition that the Prophet Ibrāhīm said he was *ḥanīfan*, i.e. a *ḥanīf*. What he meant by a *ḥanīf* was that he was a firm believer in One God Who created the heavens and the earth according to a definite pattern known as the *fiṭrah*. Furthermore he qualified his being a *ḥanīf* by adding that he firmly believes in One God without any partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule, i.e. without a *sharīk*. This important qualification was to underline his denial not only of paganism and polytheism, but of elusive henotheism. Henotheism, as we have already explained, may come in the guise of monotheism while at the same time implicitly or explicitly admit a subtle form of partnership with the One God of monotheism. From this our explanation about the Prophet Ibrāhīm's qualification, the word *ḥanīf* without such qualification simply means a believer in monotheism. But with that qualification *ḥanīf* means a believer in *true* monotheism. True monotheism was the dominant feature conveyed in the meaning of the word *ḥanīf* as qualified by the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Without that qualification the word *ḥanīf*, as known historically, referred

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So, in answer to our question: where did the word *islām* exist before being revealed in the Qur'ān?, those responsible for making such a claim will have to search elsewhere where some Prophet from among the earliest mentioned in the Qur'ān could be found who first used the words *aslama* and *muslim* and whose religion could be identified as *islām*. Then where could this Prophet be found? It is believed that Chaldea in Babylonia was where the Prophet Ibrāhīm was born about 4500 years ago. In him is found the ancient Prophet whose religion, according to them, could be identified as *islām*, thus verifying their claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān. But from what is

indicated in the Qur'ān the religion of the Prophet Ibrāhīm took a lifetime to evolve into its final form. In order for it to be identified as *islām* we have to investigate and interpret the series of significant events in his life from the time when he was a young man to the time when he attained to old age. These events took place in his experience and consciousness before as well as during and after his migration to Canaan. In his experience and consciousness we discern two stages which we call the *antecedent* state of his cognition, and that which followed in accordance with God's plan which we call the *consequent* state of his cognition.

As to the religion of the Prophet Ibrāhīm the initial stage of his antecedent state of cognition was when he was led by God to utter: "As for me, I set my face resolutely towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and as a true monotheist, *ḥanīfan*, I sincerely affirm belief in One and only God, and I am not of those who make partners unto Him", i.e. *mushrikīn*. At this stage words like *amana*, *aslama*, and *muslim* were not yet evident in the Prophet Ibrāhīm's state of cognition. That would come much later, sometime during and after his migration to Canaan. It was in the beginning of his antecedent state of cognition that the Prophet Ibrāhīm said he was *ḥanīfan*, i.e. a *ḥanīf*. What he meant by a *ḥanīf* was that he was a firm believer in One God Who created the heavens and the earth according to a definite pattern known as the *fiṭrah*. Furthermore he qualified his being a *ḥanīf* by adding that he firmly believes in One God without any partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule, i.e. without a *sharīk*. This important qualification was to underline his denial not only of paganism and polytheism, but of elusive henotheism. Henotheism, as we have already explained, may come in the guise of monotheism while at the same time implicitly or explicitly admit a subtle form of partnership with the One God of monotheism. From this our explanation about the Prophet Ibrāhīm's qualification, the word *ḥanīf* without such qualification simply means a believer in monotheism. But with that qualification *ḥanīf* means a believer in *true* monotheism. True monotheism was the dominant feature conveyed in the meaning of the word *ḥanīf* as qualified by the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Without that qualification the word *ḥanīf*, as known historically, referred



to a small number of individuals scattered about who in spite of their common belief in One God remained separate as individuals. They did not form groups to regulate their forms of belief and action into a *millah*. They did not preach repentance to the pagans and polytheists among whom they lived, nor argued against them. They related themselves to the One God by means of long vigils and some form of prayer, charity, good deeds and moral conduct as well as benevolent attitude towards others according to their own individual way. The idea of submitting, i.e. *aslama*, to the Will of God was unknown to them. The *ḥanīf*, as we know about them in history, was not a *muslim*. But the Prophet Ibrāhīm, while calling himself a *ḥanīf*, actively argued against the pagans and polytheists and preached repentance to them wherever he found them. With the passage of time and the increase in enlightenment in the state of his cognition consequent upon that which was antecedent, he formed his small number of followers as a group into a *millah* in which the expression of belief, faith, and worship was actualized, with knowledge and wisdom about matters of this world and the Hereafter, into an upright religion referred to by God as *dīnan qayyiman millata Ibrāhīma ḥanīfan*.

In the Qur'ān we notice that the word *muslim* is not found applied to refer to the Prophet Ibrāhīm personally during his lifetime. The verb *aslama*, according to our interpretation of the series of events that happened during the final stages of the consequent state of his cognition, was only applied to be used by him rather late in his life. This occurred just before or after his wife Hājar gave birth to Ismā'il, then his only son. He was then eighty-six years of age. It was when God said to him imperatively: "*Aslim*", i.e. "Submit yourself to Me"! ; and he answered: "*Aslamtu li rabb al-'ālamīn*" : "I submit myself to the Lord of all the Worlds". We have already explained the significance of his use of the special designation of God as *rabb al-'ālamīn*. It was the way God identified Himself as *Allāh* to special Prophets like Ibrāhīm and Mūsā with whom He had intimate relations. With reference to the Prophet Ibrāhīm this knowledge of God as *Allāh* means his being brought closer to Allāh's Presence that raised the state of his *īmān* to a degree of certainty from that of *'ilm al-yaqīn* to that of *'ayn al-yaqīn*. We see

in this that in his consequent state of cognition *īmān* occurred long before he was commanded to submit himself to the Will of Allāh Most High. But it was not in the Qur'ānic sense of the *inchoative* verb *aslama* that he submitted as in his time that sense of submitting did not exist. From the word *aslim* and the reply *aslamtu* in the sense of the ordinary verb *aslama* in the Qur'ān we of course infer, albeit mistakenly, that the Prophet Ibrāhīm became *muslim*. But in the Qur'ān the word *muslim* is not found to refer to him directly in his lifetime. Even with reference to his *millah* in the Qur'ān the expression used is *millata Ibrāhīma ḥanīfan*, not *ḥanīfan musliman*.

What did this mean? We have already explained that the word *muslim* in the Qur'ān is the consequent of the inchoative verb *aslama*. If the word *muslim* already contained in substance the word *islām* though not actually expressed, then the purpose and final goal of *aslama* was to bring it into actual existence in the form of a religion suitable to be named by that word. However, in the case of the Prophet Ibrāhīm, although he became a submitter late in life the word *muslim* was not applied to refer to him personally in his lifetime because the religion he brought as a *ḥanīf* in the form of a *millah* was not suitable to be named by the word *islām*, but was an anticipation of *islām* that was simply referred to as an 'upright religion', a *dīnan qayyiman*. The same applied to the religion of the *millah* of all the Prophets of God, from Nūḥ, then Ibrāhīm, then Mūsā and others following after them to 'Īsā. They all submitted to the Will of God as "*muslim*", in a manner that God had ordained for every one of their respective *millah* in the language of their people and in the form of the rites, the rules and regulations, and laws that governed them to suit their own peoples' respective ways of life. Only in that sense of their submitting themselves were they referred to by implication in the Qur'ān as being "*muslim*". Thus every one of them was a "*muslim*" in the original religion of his *millah* as his own people's Prophet, not as a "*muslim*" in the new religion of an *ummah* of all peoples of the world as a universal Prophet. This means that in the Qur'ān the term *muslim* is used as having a dual connotation: (i), it is used to refer to all the Prophets of God earlier than the Last Prophet, who were not quite *muslim*, but were being referred to by implication as *muslim* in advance

before the proper time, who professed an upright religion of their respective *millah* ordained for each of them by God; and (ii), it refers to the Last Prophet the complete and proper *muslim*, and his *ummah* who professed the true religion he brought as a universal religion perfected by God and given by Him the name of *islām*. It is therefore obvious that the Qur'ān refers to all Prophets of God earlier than the Prophet Muḥammad as being *muslim*-anticipates because they firmly believed and had faith in One and only God and obeyed His injunctions and laws ordained for them, not because the word *islām* must have existed in the past going back to antiquity referring to their respective religion as *islām* in a manner presumed by those who claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān.

The evidence in the Qur'ān suggests that the Prophet Ibrāhīm's state of cognition in matters of religion understood the meaning of the word *muslim* in the Qur'ān as nothing more than 'a submitter' to the One God of true monotheism in the context of a religion that that God had ordained for his *millah*, i.e. a *dīnan qayyiman*. Any idea of the implication about the word *islām* being contained in substance in the word *muslim* was unknown to him. Although he is represented in the Qur'ān as being aware of the word *muslim* he did not refer to himself as such; nor was it ever applied to refer to him in his lifetime. It was his grandson through his son the Prophet Ishāq, i.e. the Prophet Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl, who first among the three Patriarchs alluded to himself and his children using the word *muslim* when he said to them in exhortation: 'O my children, God has chosen for you your religion, so do not let yourselves die except as submitters unto Him.' (*Al-Baqarah* (2):132). Here too, *muslimūn*, the plural of the word *muslim*, is understood simply as 'submitters'. The expression 'your religion' referred to the religion of the *millah* of his grandfather Ibrāhīm (cf. *Al-Baqarah* (2):130-131). It is a fallacy to construe the words 'your religion' there as referring to a religion called *islām*, or to identify the *dīnan qayyiman* with *islām*. The truth will manifest itself as we go along explaining the matter further. We have no clear indication of how many people constituted the *millah* of Ibrāhīm. Even in the *millah* of Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl the number of people it consisted of was quite

small. According to biblical scholars of the Old Testament, his people consisted of only seventy (70) people: his twelve sons, their wives, children and grandchildren, who became known in history as the *Banī Isrā'īl*, the Children of Isrā'īl. His exhortation to his children cited above was probably given in Hebron in the land of Canaan, which in his time was under the sovereignty of Egypt and ruled by her Governor. We know from the Qur'ān that one of his sons, the Prophet Yūsuf, became Governor of Egypt at the time when Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl was already an old man. Centuries later, the descendants of the *Banī Isrā'īl* formed themselves into Tribes, *al-asbāt*, which became the ancestors of the Prophets of the *Banī Isrā'īl*.

Let us now consider the meaning of what God says in *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, *āyah* 4. There God says: "We have not sent a Prophet to convey a message except in the language of his own people in order to make it clear to them." The Prophets Ibrāhīm, Ishāq, and Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl, and their people were Hebrews. According to the *āyah* just quoted, God's sending of messages to them must have been in their own Hebraic language in order to make the messages clear to them and to their people. But in the Qur'ān, which was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad some three thousand years later, what they said and did was recorded and quoted by God in Arabic. It is already evident that it was impossible for the Arabic words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* to have existed at the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm and his sons, or at the time of the Prophet Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl and his sons and their descendants the *Banī Isrā'īl*. Obviously, what was quoted by God in Arabic in the Qur'ān was the equivalent of what they said in Hebraic. As to what the Hebraic words said were, that was known only to God. Whatever they were, the Hebraic word that corresponded with the Arabic word *muslim* would have conveyed to their understanding only the notion of one who truly submitted to the One and only God in the context of the religion of the *millah* of Ibrāhīm without involving themselves in nonexistent grammatical subtleties. We said that it was impossible for the Arabic words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* to have existed in the religious vocabulary of the Arabs at the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm and his sons, and also at the time of the Prophet Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl and his sons and their descendants the *Banī*



*Isrā'īl*. What evidence from the Qur'ān can we adduce to verify what we said? This needs to be explained below.

The Arabs, earlier than the Hebrews, were a people of great antiquity. They too were descended from Sām, the eldest son of the Prophet Nūḥ five generations from Nūḥ after the Flood. Their earliest Prophets sent by God to convey His messages to their people were the Prophet Hūd to the people of 'Ād; and the Prophet Šāliḥ to the people of Thamūd. These Prophets and their people, the 'Ād and the Thamūd, were the original Arabs and spoke linguistically pure Arabic i.e. *Arab al-Āribah*. 'Ād lived in the deserts of Yaman, and in the mountains between 'Oman and Ḥaḍramaut near the sea. Thamūd lived in a region between the Ḥijāz and Tabūk. They lived a thousand years before the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Eventually, with the passage of time, one of their successors, the Jurhum, who lived in the Ḥijāz happened to be a contemporary of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. They were the people who found Hājar and her baby son Ismā'īl by the well of Zamzam and, with Hājar's permission, stayed on with them. Ibrāhīm became acquainted with the Jurhum as he often visited his wife and only son at the site near where the Ka'bah was to be built by him and his son. Ismā'īl grew up among the Jurhum. When he was old enough he married one of their girls with his father's approval. He learned to speak Arabic from the Jurhum, excelled them in proficiency and eloquence and Arabized himself i.e. became *Arab al-Musta'ribah*. But it took almost another thousand years after the time of Ibrāhīm before another Arab Prophet was sent God's messages to convey to his people. He was the Prophet Shu'ayb of the people of Madyān. They lived just before the time of the Prophet Mūsā. Madyān was a flourishing Arab city close to the Syrian borders and not far from the Dead Sea. The people were also one of the successors of the tradition of the original Arabs who spoke linguistically pure Arabic. Without going into further details about these three Arab Prophets: Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb; and the events that took place between them and their people, we will concentrate our survey on what they and their people said with reference to God's messages as recorded in the Qur'ān. Our survey will concentrate on what they *said* because their verbal expressions will reveal to us important information

about the scope of the religious vocabulary of the Arabs currently existing for about two thousand years from the time of the Prophet Hūd to that of the Prophet Shu'ayb. This will involve an examination of the messages God sent to them as recorded in the Qur'ān. Since their language is the same as the language of the Qur'ān, that fact will ensure authentic identity of the words used in the verbal arguments between Prophet and People with those recorded in many *āyahs* in different *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān.

After consulting the Qur'ān repeatedly seeking the relevant *āyahs*, we find 67 *āyahs* in 10 *sūrahs* referring to the 'Ād; 66 *āyahs* in 9 *sūrahs* referring to the Thamūd; and 34 *āyahs* in 4 *sūrahs* referring to the Madyān. We have carefully examined the text of all 167 *āyahs* in 23 *sūrahs* of the messages conveyed by the Prophets Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb to their people of 'Ād, Thamūd, and Madyān respectively. In the recountal of their verbal arguments recorded in several *āyahs*, we find the words *īmān* and *mu'min* being used by them. But in the verbal expressions in the arguments recorded in every one hundred and sixty-seven *āyahs* we do not at all find the words *aslama* and *muslim*. This means that God's messages sent to the Prophets Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb to convey to their people of 'Ād, Thamūd, and Madyān did not contain the words *aslama* and *muslim*. The words *aslama* and *muslim* are key words that lead to the focus word *islām*. The fact that *aslama* and *muslim* were not contained in the messages God sent to the three Arab Prophets clearly indicated that those words did not exist in the language of the Arabs of antiquity. The Prophets Hūd and Šāliḥ lived about a thousand years before the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm; and Shu'ayb lived almost another thousand years after the time of Ibrāhīm and about a hundred years before the time of the Prophet Mūsā. So, this means that it had been God's plan all along that the words *aslama* and *muslim*, that would lead to *islām*, would be reserved by Him to come into existence only about another two thousand years after the time of Shu'ayb to the time of the last Arab Prophet, Muḥammad.

This important discovery based on the evidence of the Holy Qur'ān, that the words *aslama* and *muslim* did not exist in the religious vocabulary of the language of the Arabs of antiquity, while the

words *īmān* and *mu'min* did exist, allows us to resolve fundamental problems of interpretation with finality. We see that the messages God sent to the Arab Prophets Hūd, Šāliḥ and Shu'ayb to convey to their people were all focused on belief and faith, i.e. *īmān*, in One and only God to Whom alone is worship due, as the first principle of religion. This first principle, from which the natural inclination to submit to God, *aslama*, in the way approved by Him, *ṭaw'an*, leads the continuous submitter, *muslim*, ultimately to *islām*.

Let us now proceed with finality to verify our statement that the word *muslim* was not used in the Qur'ān to refer to the Prophet Ibrāhīm personally during his lifetime. Now that we have demonstrated that the word *muslim* was not yet in existence in the religious vocabulary of the Arabic language in the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm, it is obvious why he was not referred to as being *muslim*. Then again, since the word *muslim* already contained in substance the word *islām* though not actually expressed, and since the word *muslim* did not yet exist in Prophet Ibrāhīm's time, the word *islām* implied in it also did not exist. It is therefore ridiculous to attempt to identify the *dīnan qayyiman* of Ibrāhīm's *millah* with *islām*, or to call it with the name *islām*. The nonexistence of the word *muslim* then was also the reason why the word *musliman* was not found applied in the Qur'ān to qualify the word *ḥanīfan* in the expression *millata Ibrāhīma ḥanīfan*. The religious state of the Prophet Ibrāhīm being a *muslim* was only obliquely referred to when the qualification *musliman* was added to the *ḥanīfan* of his *millah*, i.e. *ḥanīfan musliman*. And this qualification was only added to *ḥanīfan* some three thousand years later when in the Qur'ān the Prophet Muḥammad, with God's guidance and instruction, used it to contradict the Jews and the Christians of Madīnah who claimed that Ibrāhīm was a Jew and also a Christian. This took place soon after his *Hijrah* to Madīnah, during his involvement in the dispute between the Jews and the Christians, when he was guided by God's revelation to tell them that Ibrāhīm was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian, but that he was a true monotheist, *ḥanīfan*, and a submitter, *musliman*, to the Will of God; and that he was not of those who make partners unto Him. (*Āli 'Imrān* (3):67). It was this version, i.e. with the word *musliman* added after the word *ḥanīfan*,

that the original affirmation of faith of the Prophet Ibrāhīm was combined and made complete by the Prophet Muḥammad with his own affirmation of faith as instructed by God. This combined affirmation of faith of the two Prophets Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad was established as the affirmation of faith said by every Muslim male and female as the Opening words at the beginning of the five daily prescribed prayers.

As to the exhortation of the Prophet Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl to his children using the word *muslim* when he said to them: "....., do not let yourselves die except as *muslims*.", i.e. 'except as *submitters* unto God,' this is the *āyah* that those who claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān have been looking for to adduce as proof to verify their claim. Their reasoning is that since the key word *muslim* used in the Qur'ān already implied *islām*, and that it is being used in this *āyah* referring to what was said by Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl, who lived thousands of years before the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed, it therefore means that the word *islām* must have existed long before its being revealed in the Qur'ān. When they think, with reference to this *āyah*, that the word *islām* must have existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān because of what was said by Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl in his exhortation to his children, they assume that he spoke to them in Arabic and, at the same time, take for granted that the words *muslim* and *islām* were there to be used. They assume and take for granted in this way obviously because they mentally posit this *āyah* in the time and place of Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl. They make this anachronistic fallacy without realizing that when this *āyah* is taken out of its place in the Qur'ān to a different time and place – even if it were only in the mind – it will not be the same *āyah*, but its equivalent in a different language to suit the people of that time and place. The Prophet Ya'qūb-Isrā'īl was Hebrew, not Arab, and his own language and that of his people was Hebraic. His exhortation to his children was therefore said by him in Hebraic, and in that language the Arabic words *muslim* and *islām* implied in it did not exist. Not only that, even in Arabic then, though unknown to those who make that claim, those words were non-existent. They may say that the very idea that the word *muslim* already implied *islām* is found in the



Qur'ān itself. We will say yes, the very idea that the word *muslim* already implied *islām* is found in the Qur'ān itself, so leave it there, and do not take it out to extrapolate it to become an idea that is not in the Qur'ān. The word *muslim* already contained in substance the word *islām* though not actually expressed, but they have actually expressed it in the wrong time and place for it to be actual; they have made actual before its proper time what is merely implied and they have done this without the authority of the Qur'ān. Whereas in the Qur'ān, *islām* already implied in the word *muslim* remained implied in the word *muslim*, both of which were actualized only in their proper time when they were realized in the person of the Prophet Muḥammad.

We have said something momentous when we said above that both the words *muslim* and *islām* already implied in it in the Qur'ān, were brought into actual existence only in their proper time when they were realized in the person of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is not merely incidental that soon after we said this, it occurred to our cognition that the Prophet Muḥammad himself in the Qur'ān confirmed the truth of what we said above by saying: "I am the first *muslim*." He said this in *Sūrah al-An'ām*, a *Sūrah* of the late Makkan period, when God commanded him to say: "Truly, my prayer and my devotion, my living and my dying, are for Allāh, the Lord of all the Worlds; no partner has He; of this I am commanded, and I am the first of the *muslims*." (162; 163). When the Prophet said that he was 'the first of the *muslims*', he was not saying that on his own account, as if those words were not a concluding part of the preceding account of what he was commanded to say; but he said those words in compliance with God's command for him to say so. Preceding what he said in *Sūrah al-An'ām*, he was commanded to confirm in advance what he said there in a *Sūrah* of the middle Makkan period, in *Sūrah al-Zumar*. There God bade him say: "Verily I am commanded to worship God making my faith pure and sincere for Him; and I am commanded to be the first of the *muslims*" (*Al-Zumar* (39): 11-12). In the expression "making my faith pure and sincere for Him" is meant by 'faith' not only in the sense of *īmān*, but includes actualizing the teachings and moral principles imparted by *īmān* forming a system of religion, *dīn*. It

is in this sense that the word *dīn* is meant in the phrase *mukhlīṣan lahu al-dīn* translated above as 'making my faith pure and sincere for Him.' This system of religion was inherent in the word *islām* that was already implied in the word *muslim*, and that was then brought forth to become actualized by the Prophet as the first of the *muslims*. Thus it was *islām* as a system of religion that the Prophet meant when he referred to "my religion" in the next but one *āyah* where God told him to say: "It is God I worship making my religion pure and sincere for Him, i.e. *mukhlīṣan lahu dīnī*. In the *Sūrah al-An'ām*, the Prophet was commanded to say that he was 'the first' of the *muslims*, i.e. *anā awwal al-muslimīn*; we note that here in the *Sūrah al-Zumar*, the Prophet was told to say: "I am commanded to be the first of the *muslims*, i.e. *li an akūna awwal al-muslimīn*. The expression 'to be', or *li an akūna*, in this case expresses a futurity, like 'will be' or 'shall be' or what is 'intended to be.' The Prophet would have known from what was revealed to him in the Qur'ān about the messages God sent to the Arab Prophets of antiquity and their people, to Hūd and Šālīḥ, then to Shu'ayb extending over a period of two thousand years. He would have known that the words *aslama* and *muslim* were not found to have existed in the religious vocabulary of the language of the Arabs. Then for the remaining period of two thousand years between the Prophet Shu'ayb and himself no other Arab Prophet was sent by God to the Arabs because the occasion for the actualization of the historic concepts inherent in the words *aslama* and *muslim* had not yet arisen during that interregnum between Shu'ayb and Muḥammad. This interpretation explains the notion of the 'futurity' expressed by the words *li an akūna* cited above. It confirms our previous statement that it had been God's plan all along that the words *aslama* and *muslim* that would lead to *islām* would be reserved by God to come into existence only two thousand years after the time of the third Arab Prophet, Shu'ayb, to the time of the fourth and last Arab Prophet, Muḥammad.

When in *Sūrah al-Zumar* the Prophet was commanded by God to say that he was *intended to be* the first of the *muslims*, i.e. *umirtu li-an akūna awwal al-muslimīn* (39:12), we are prompted to ask when did it take place, this *intended event* for the Prophet to be the

first of the *muslims*? It was foretelling the Prophet's future in the past, in the past some time during the early stages of the Prophet's twenty-three years of striving in fulfillment of the Revelation to bring about the religion of *islām*. The religion was revealed to him gradually at different times on special occasions both in Makkah and in Madinah when the Prophet was preaching the religion and had to defend it in the confrontation against idolaters, hypocrites, Jews and Christians. It was in Makkah, when he began preaching in the face of strong opposition from the idolaters who were ruled and encouraged by the influential chiefs of the clans of the Quraish, that God introduced the name *islām* of the religion the Prophet was propagating, praising and commending it to the Prophet and his followers, at different times and on special occasions, as the religion was beginning to unfold its final phase of evolvement among the Arabs. God inspired the Prophet to use the name *muslim* for himself and, through him, his followers, by which they could identify themselves with a single name denoting group identity and solidarity as believers in the religion they were fighting for. God assured them He would protect their religion when their religion was still a form of *millah* and was not yet realized as the *dīn* that would be called *al-islām*. He urged them to fight for its realization and to have no fear of the enemy but to fear and obey Him. He encouraged them with the promise of final victory in this world and success in the Hereafter.

The occasion when the Prophet was inspired to identify himself and his group of followers as *muslim* was the *intended event* for the Prophet to assume his proper place as the first of the *muslims*, i.e. the first person in whom the name *muslim* was for the first time realized. This occasion served as preliminary to the one to come that would explain the futurity foretold in *āyah* (12) of *Sūrah al-Zumar*, which point to *āyah* (163) of *Sūrah al-An'ām*, where God bade the Prophet announce that he was *the first* of the *muslims*: *ana awwal al-muslimīn*. Considering the logical order of events that led to his announcement, it must have taken place sometime close to the final stage of the Prophet's mission, most probably just after the *Hijrah* and his victorious occupation of Makkah without a fight resulting from the general conversion of the Arab tribes

to *islām* as a consequence of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. These momentous events were recorded in Revelation in *Sūrah al-Fath* and finally in *Sūrah al-Naṣr*. Ultimately, after twenty-three years of striving in fulfillment of the Revelation, when the Prophet and his followers had proven themselves equal to God's expectation, did He tell them: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you *al-Islām* as your religion." *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, *āyah* 3.

Our inference that the Prophet was inspired by God to use the name *muslim* for himself, and through him, his followers, by which they could identify themselves with a single name denoting group identity and solidarity as believers in the religion they were fighting for, is validated by historical and textual evidence indicated in the Qur'ān. In *Sūrah al-Hajj āyah* (78) God says: "It is He Who has named you *muslims*, from before, and in this....": *Huwa sammākum al-muslimīn min qablu wa fī hādhā...* With regard to the words 'from before', i.e. *min qablu*, where did the time 'before' refer to? Did 'before' refer to bygone times before the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, going back to antiquity to the time of the Prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il – or even further back to the time of the Prophet Nūḥ? We think not; we maintain that 'before' referred to the time of the Prophet at the beginning stage of his mission, when God first inspired him to use the name *muslim* as a calling signifying group identity and solidarity of believers in what the group was propagating. God named the Prophet and his original group of followers *muslimīn* before *islām* became a religion, and when the Qur'ān was not yet revealed as a Book. Notice that first He said 'from before': *min qablu*; and then He added 'and in this': *wa fī hādhā*; showing that between *min qablu* and *wa fī hādhā* He was referring to the same period of time beginning from the early, to the middle, and then to the late Makkan period leading to the last period in Madinah after Hudaibiyyah. The whole of this important *āyah* was addressed to the Arabs when they were already organized as a disciplined *muslim* community soon to become a nation, an *ummah* of *muslimīn* master of the whole of Arabia. The word *hādhā* in *wa fī hādhā* referred to *this very āyah* in the Revelation, i.e. the Qur'ān, whose revelation was nearing its end.



first of the *muslims*? It was foretelling the Prophet's future in the past, in the past some time during the early stages of the Prophet's twenty-three years of striving in fulfillment of the Revelation to bring about the religion of *islām*. The religion was revealed to him gradually at different times on special occasions both in Makkah and in Madīnah when the Prophet was preaching the religion and had to defend it in the confrontation against idolaters, hypocrites, Jews and Christians. It was in Makkah, when he began preaching in the face of strong opposition from the idolaters who were ruled and encouraged by the influential chiefs of the clans of the Quraish, that God introduced the name *islām* of the religion the Prophet was propagating, praising and commending it to the Prophet and his followers, at different times and on special occasions, as the religion was beginning to unfold its final phase of evolvement among the Arabs. God inspired the Prophet to use the name *muslim* for himself and, through him, his followers, by which they could identify themselves with a single name denoting group identity and solidarity as believers in the religion they were fighting for. God assured them He would protect their religion when their religion was still a form of *millah* and was not yet realized as the *dīn* that would be called *al-islām*. He urged them to fight for its realization and to have no fear of the enemy but to fear and obey Him. He encouraged them with the promise of final victory in this world and success in the Hereafter.

The occasion when the Prophet was inspired to identify himself and his group of followers as *muslim* was the *intended event* for the Prophet to assume his proper place as the first of the *muslims*, i.e. the first person in whom the name *muslim* was for the first time realized. This occasion served as preliminary to the one to come that would explain the futurity foretold in *āyah* (12) of *Sūrah al-Zumar*, which point to *āyah* (163) of *Sūrah al-An'ām*, where God bade the Prophet announce that he was *the first* of the *muslims*: *ana awal al-muslimīn*. Considering the logical order of events that led to his announcement, it must have taken place sometime close to the final stage of the Prophet's mission, most probably just after the *Hijrah* and his victorious occupation of Makkah without a fight resulting from the general conversion of the Arab tribes

to *islām* as a consequence of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. These momentous events were recorded in Revelation in *Sūrah al-Fath* and finally in *Sūrah al-Naṣr*. Ultimately, after twenty-three years of striving in fulfillment of the Revelation, when the Prophet and his followers had proven themselves equal to God's expectation, did He tell them: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you *al-Islām* as your religion." *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, *āyah* 3.

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When God bade the Prophet to announce that he was the first of the *muslims*, it was in *Sūrah al-An‘ām*, a late Makkan *sūrah* revealed just before his *Hijrah* to Madīnah. The Prophet must have expected this bidding because God had already informed him about being intended to be the first of the *muslims* some years earlier in *Sūrah al-Zūmar*, a middle Makkan *sūrah*. It is clear that what strikes our attention in these revelations about the Prophet being the *first*, *awwal*, of the *muslims*, is what did the word ‘first’ mean in this case, and to what period of time did the word ‘first’ refer? It is misleading to think that in this case the word ‘first’ is an ambiguous term to be treated differently from what it says. On the contrary, we assert that the word definitely means ‘first’ in the order of time, first in occurrence. Then when the Prophet was referring to himself being the first of the *muslims*, did that mean ‘first’ in his time in Arabia, in the Near East, or in the world at large? We think not. Our view is that the Prophet was the first of the *muslims* in the chronological sense for all time in his past, his present, and his future. The Prophet was the first of the *muslims* from before his time in the past going back to antiquity before the time of the Prophet Ibrāhīm and further back before the Flood to the time of the Prophet Nūḥ and the historical beginnings of human civilization.

We have proven the validity of our view with verification from evidence given in the texts of the Qur’ān that the words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* did not exist in the religious vocabulary of the Arabic language for four thousand years from the time of the Arab Prophets Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu‘ayb to the time of Muḥammad, and that those words came into existence only in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad when the Qur’ān was being revealed to him. It follows from this that all Prophets of God sent before Muḥammad, from Nūḥ then Ibrāhīm and his sons Ismā‘īl and Ishāq and their descendents, and all Prophets of God, were not authenticated in the Qur’ān as being *muslim*, but were referred to by implication only as *muslim* in advance before the proper time for them to be actually authenticated as *muslim*. The proper time for them would be when the religion of *Islām* was established in Arabia together with the formation of an *ummah* of *muslims*, then they would all be incorporated into this *ummah* as authentic *muslims*.

From the revelation about the Covenant between the Prophets Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm, and Mūsā, then ‘Īsā, and also Muḥammad – the *mūthāq al-nabiyyīn* (3:81; 33:7) – we take it for granted that all the Prophets of God earlier than the Last knew about the coming of Muḥammad, the Last of the Prophets, whose mission was to establish the religion of *Islām* and form an *ummah* of *muslims*. They put their trust in God and submitted to His Will in the manner ordained for them. They anticipated being included in the *ummah al-muslimīn* when that *ummah* comes into existence. This expectation on their part becomes evident from what they themselves said about it. The Prophet Nūḥ said to his people: “I am commanded by God that I am *intended to be* among the *muslims*.” (*Yūnus* (10): 72); the Prophet Ibrāhīm already anticipated the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad and the formation of the *muslim ummah*, the *ummatah muslimatan* that he prayed for and together with his son Ismā‘īl said: “Our Lord! Make us both *muslim* unto you.” (*Al-Baqarah* (2): 128); the Prophet Ya‘qūb-Isrā‘īl in exhortation to his sons said: “Do not let yourselves die except as *muslims*.” (*Al-Baqarah* (2): 132); the Prophet Yūsuf said: “Let me die as a *muslim*.” (*Yūsuf* (12): 101); the Prophet ‘Īsā said: “O Children of Isrā‘īl, I am God’s Messenger sent to you to confirm what remains of the *Taurāt*, and to convey glad tidings of a Messenger who comes after me whose name is Aḥmad.” (*Al-Ṣaff* (61): 6). They were all ‘*muslim-anticipates*’ looking forward to the time when their authentication as being authentic *muslim* would actually happen.

NB. From the very beginning of this discourse we have earnestly pondered over the words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* in the Qur’ān. With God’s help and guidance we have gradually come to know with the certainty of inspired knowledge their intended meaning and purpose. We have explained at length with deliberation based on the evidence derived from the *āyats* of the Qur’ān our discoveries that we have proven and are incontrovertible. For our readers of discernment who wish to follow the logic of our reasoning, we request them to kindly peruse the foregoing pages of this discourse from pages 49 to 65 above. Thank you.

With regard to the word *aslama* in the Qur’ān, it was first applied to be used by the Prophet Ibrāhīm when God said to



him imperatively: “*Aslim!*”, i.e. “Submit yourself to Me!”; and he responded by saying: “*Aslamtu li rabb al-‘ālamīn*”, (2: 131), meaning: “I truly and sincerely submit myself to the Will of God in unconditional obedience to His every command.” Those who claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur’ān presume that the verb *aslama* used there by the Prophet Ibrāhīm indicated that he proceeded to submit to attain to the state of being *muslim* leading to *islām* in the sequential process: *aslim* > *aslama* > *muslim* > *islām*. The very idea of theirs that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur’ān is deceptive. The word *islām* cannot exist elsewhere other than in the Arabic language of the Qur’ān. Since they have mentally posited it elsewhere than in the Qur’ān, it will no longer be in Arabic and will therefore not be the word *islām*. In fact the words *aslim* and *aslama* in this case will also not be Arabic words; they were said by God to the Prophet Ibrāhīm in the language of the Prophet Ibrāhīm which was ancient Hebraic. Therefore it is impossible for the word *islām* to have existed before being revealed in the Qur’ān. But even without referring to their false claim, their presumption that the word *aslim* and *aslamtu* in the *āyah* referred to above lead to being *muslim* and then to *islām* is a mistake. Whatever it may be, they fail to produce textual evidence from the Qur’ān to indicate when was the command *aslim* given; in what connection was it given; and how did the Prophet Ibrāhīm submit his self to the Will of God.

We will show, in our interpretation of this command *aslim* and the response *aslamtu*, that the *aslama* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm is just an ordinary verb meaning ‘to submit’, which in this particular case refers to a demand by God for the Prophet Ibrāhīm to agree to give up his whole self to God whenever the occasion arises for him to do so. There is a futurity in this demand of God, whose purpose as far as the Prophet Ibrāhīm was concerned was then unknown to him. We maintain that the *aslamtu* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm in this *āyah* is not meant to be understood in the sense of *aslama* that would lead to being *muslim* and then to *islām*. The command *aslim* was given without reference to any incident that happened at the time when it was given. As we have stated, the command *aslim* was only a demand by God for the Prophet Ibrāhīm to agree to give up his

whole self to God whenever the occasion arises for him to be called upon to do so. That is all. And now we will give our interpretation with textual evidence from the Qur’ān to show where the command *aslim* would lead to.

After the series of events that happened during his arguments with his father and his people about their error in practicing idolatry and polytheism, and their barbarous attempt to get rid of him, Ibrāhīm as a young man left his native land in a journey of migration that would lead to Canaan. As he left he said: “I am going to my Lord. He will surely guide me.” (*Al-Şaffāt* (37): 99). His journeys and temporary stays in different places in Babylonia and Syria before, during, and after his final settlement in Canaan, took a lifetime during which many things happened that increased his knowledge and enlightenment. His wife Sarah was with him all the time without ever being with child because she was barren. He was growing old and earnestly asked God to grant him a righteous son (*Al-Şaffāt* (37): 100-101). Only after his visit to Egypt; when Hājar became his wife with Sarah’s approval, did God answer his prayer to grant him a righteous son. Ibrāhīm was then eighty-six years of age. Sometime just before or after Hājar gave birth to Ismā‘īl, God put to effect His plan to try Ibrāhīm’s loyalty and obedience by giving the command *aslim* to get Ibrāhīm’s assent to give up his whole self to God whenever the occasion arises for him to be called upon to do so. Responding to this command, Ibrāhīm without hesitation gave his assent *aslamtu* to submit his whole self to God and to obey Him in unconditional obedience to His every command. Thus it was that soon after Hājar gave birth to Ismā‘īl, then his only begotten son, God conveyed to him, in some dreamlike state of consciousness, words of command, *kalimāt*, instructing him to take Hājar and her still suckling baby to a precise place in the Ḥijāz of faraway Arabia and leave them there to fend for themselves. Imagine the sense of deprivation, the anguish and dismay, that must have assailed the heart of a loving father who had just been bestowed the gift of a precious son. But Ibrāhīm obeyed the words of command at once, putting his firm faith and trust in God to take care of them. God took care of them allowing him to make occasional visits and stays with them until the boy grew to become

a youth ready to work with his father. Then again, it was at this stage of their lives that God, in accordance with His plan, caused to arise the occasion for Him to test the degree of obedience of Ibrāhīm's assent *aslamtu* to submit his whole self to God and to obey Him in unconditional obedience to His every command. So, in a dream vision God signified to Ibrāhīm in words of command, *kalimāt* to offer his son Ismā'il in sacrifice. Since in this sacrifice his son Ismā'il was inextricately involved, the test of the degree of obedience to submit his whole self to the Will of God applied also to Ismā'il. But it was how far the *aslama* would go in the *aslamtu* of Ibrāhīm that was really put to this severe trial, *ibtīlā'*, because he was to be the *fā'il*, the sole agent, the doer of the deed to be done, on whom alone rested the burden of responsibility, whereas Ismā'il was to be the *qābil*, the recipient on whom the deed was to be done. So, only after Ibrāhīm in unconditional obedience had fulfilled his assignment conveyed to him in a dream vision by His words of command, when both he and his son Ismā'il had truly submitted to His Will and Ibrāhīm was about to perform the act of sacrifice, that God the omnipresent witness to everything that happened confirmed with the words *fa lammā aslamā* the genuineness of their *aslama*, thereby authenticating the supreme degree of Ibrāhīm's obedience to submit his whole self to the Will of God. It was then that God called out to Ibrāhīm to tell him that he had fulfilled his vision, that there was no need to go any further, and that this was obviously a trial; (*Al-Sāffāt* (37): 99-106). Thus we show that God's command *aslim* and Ibrāhīm's response *aslamtu* was meant to lead to the sacrifice, which once considered by God fulfilled ends there.

In this our interpretation we have explained when and why the command *aslim* was given to Ibrāhīm at the time when it was given, and the purpose for it to be given at that time. We explained that it was given rather late in his life after he left his native land in a journey of migration that would lead him to Canaan, where he and his wife Sarah, who accompanied him throughout the journey, finally settled. It is important for us to show here that this journey of migration was not a simple straightforward affair. It involved many stops and stays on the way for weeks, months and years, in many different places along the route taken extending almost

3000 kilometers of difficult terrain. Consider also the fact that they have to travel this extent of kilometres riding camels and on foot and other ancient modes of travel, together with a few retainers and followers. They would also need to provide themselves with tents and provisions as well as a small herd of cattle. Based on the general conclusions in the researches of biblical scholars of the Old Testament and historians of the ancient world of that period we derive information that Ibrāhīm started his journey from Ur of the Chaldaea in lower Babylonia. From there he proceeded in a north-westerly direction to Bābil, i.e. Babylon, the capital city of Babylonia, i.e. ancient Iraq. The distance from Ur to Bābil was about 200 kilometers. After a stop at Bābil and still in a north-westerly direction he travelled about 400 kilometers to Mari, a city-state situated on the right bank of the Euphrates in Syria. We do not know how long he stayed in Mari, but it must have been for some weeks or months before he continued his journey from Mari further north to Haran about 300 kilometers away. Haran was a city in Mitanni eastern Turkey close to the Syrian border. It is the same city of Urfa in East Turkey. It is known historically and according to local tradition that Ibrāhīm stayed there for many years. After his sojourn in Haran, Ibrāhīm reversed his journey from Haran in a south-westerly direction for about 300 kilometers to Tadmor in Syria, now identified as Palmyra. Then from Tadmor he continued his journey south-west for about 450 kilometers past the city of Damascus in Syria and following the curve of the Mediterranean coastline to the city of Shechem in Canaan. The geographical configuration of Canaan in the ancient world was not definite and therefore not clear. It was difficult to determine a fixed boundry over the spread of an area of land that could be identified as a unified country called Canaan. Many towns and cities in different places and social and cultural traditions were called Canaan. In the Prophet Ibrāhīm's time the region called Canaan and a part of Syria including Damascus was a province of the Egyptian Empire of the Hyksos Pharaohs and ruled by a Governor resident in the city of Avaris on the Delta of the Nile in Lower Egypt. It was to the city of Avaris that Ibrāhīm together with Sarah and their retinue continued their journey southward for about 450 kilometers from



Shechem, following the curve of the Mediterranean coastline past Gaza to Avaris. This journey had to be done in order to get the necessary provisions for their settlement in Canaan close to the city of Shechem, where in another period cities like Jericho, Jerusalem, and Hebron would be founded. It was said that Ibrāhīm and Sarah stayed 20 years in the area where Jerusalem, about 60 kilometers south of Shechem, would much later be founded. On their return journey from Avaris to Shechem, Ibrāhīm and Sarah were accompanied by the Egyptian Copt Hājar, said to be a gift as handmaid for Sarah from the Governor of Avaris.

In our interpretation we only mention the fact that Hājar became Ibrāhīm's wife with Sarah's approval. We did not mention the story, based on what was reported in the Old Testament, of how the barren Sarah gave Hājar to Ibrāhīm to be his wife in the hope that perhaps she would give him the son he had earnestly prayed to God to grant him; and how when Hājar became pregnant with Ismā'īl, Ibrāhīm's first begotten son, she became haughty towards Sarah who in anger complained to Ibrāhīm to get rid of Hājar and her baby son; and how Ibrāhīm, in order to placate Sarah, took Hājar and his only son to the Ḥijāz in Arabia and left them in a precise place in the wilderness to fend for themselves. We did not mention this story purposely because we consider the reasoning about Ibrāhīm's extraordinary journey to Arabia to abandon his wife and only son simply to placate Sarah was quite frivolous and unworthy of acceptance as actually true. It contradicted the moral standard in the character and conduct of both Sarah and Ibrāhīm to behave as depicted in the story. Has it occurred to any discerning mind why Ibrāhīm would take Hājar and her still suckling baby, his only begotten son for whom he had prayed to God to grant him, on an arduous journey on camel and on foot over a distance of more than 3000 kilometers from where he and Sarah had temporarily settled, to a precise place he hardly knew in the Ḥijāz half-way down along the length of the Red Sea, and abandon them there? Was it to placate Sarah? – No!, our explanation why the journey was undertaken was certainly not to placate Sarah; the idea of placating Sarah was just an excuse to evade having to explain Ibrāhīm's unawareness that his journey would initiate the

process of events in a sequence that would change the map of the world, that would eventually shape the world into a new world of universal brotherhood of mankind.

Ibrāhīm was unaware that his journey indicated the unfolding of God's plan to bring about that process of events according to a sequence beginning with Hājar and her baby being abandoned in that particular place in the Ḥijāz. There Hājar's travail and endurance would bring about the existence of Zamzam and become forever memorialized by mankind in the ceremonies of the Pilgrimage; then Hājar and her baby Ismā'īl would be found by the Jurhum who would stay there with them and take care of them; Ismā'īl would then be brought up among the Jurhum by Hājar and Ibrāhīm who would often visit them for temporary stays; then in the vicinity of that particular place where Ismā'īl and his mother were abandoned, and Ismā'īl had become a youth ready to work with his father, Ibrāhīm in obedience to God's Will would offer his son Ismā'īl in sacrifice; after that and in the particular place referred to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl would build the Ka'bah and organize the ceremonies in connection with the Pilgrimage; by then Ismā'īl would have married a girl of the Jurhum with Ibrāhīm's approval and would eventually become the progenitor of a new Arab nation; through Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm would also become progenitor of this new Arab nation; the precise place where Hājar and her baby son Ismā'īl were abandoned would become the site where the city of Makkah would be founded.

We have just given a résumé of the sequence in the process of events that happened resulting from Ibrāhīm's journey. We said that Ibrāhīm was unaware of the purpose of his journey. But he was of course aware that his journey was prompted by God. He became aware of the purpose of his journey only after he, together with Ismā'īl, had fulfilled God's instruction to build the Ka'bah and taught them the rites connected with it. By looking back upon his experience in the unfolding of the process of events according to the sequence involved from the beginning to his present situation in the same location, Ibrāhīm would have realized the meaning and purpose of the Divine plan. He would begin to have some prescience – a foreknowing of momentous events that would come

into existence in some future time when there would be born a Prophet from among his Arab progeny who would recite God's Words as revealed to him and teach the message of the revelation and the wisdom and bring into existence the universal religion. This prescience is indicated in *āyah* 127-129 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. But the Prophet Ibrāhīm did not realize that that Prophet would be born and begin his mission at the very same place where he was situated.

As to how it was possible for Ibrāhīm to be able to make the journey prompted by God over territory and leading to a precise place completely unknown to him, we said that God prompted him in a dream-like state of consciousness, a state of alertness of mind as in a dream that was not only pictorial in character, but that he also heard words of guidance and instruction to direct him on the way to go. We deliberately use the term *kalimāt* in our explanation of the words of guidance and instruction, as well as give our definition of what they mean in this case in allusion to the way the term is used in *āyah* 124 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, where God says: "And remember Ibrāhīm was tried by his Lord with certain words of command which he fulfilled." Classical commentators have exhaustively discussed to what matters did these *kalimāt* refer in the case of the Prophet Ibrāhīm mentioned in the Qur'ān. Their deliberations listed some 40 items derived from certain *āyahs* in *Sūrahs al-Tawbah* (9); *al-Aḥzāb* (33); *al-Mu'minūn* (23); *al-Baqarah* (2); and *al-Ma'ārij* (70). These are respectively: (9):112; (33):35; (23):1-10; (2): 37, 260; and (70): 22-34). These *āyahs* refer to exemplary conduct expressing genuine devotion to God by *muslims* and *mu'mins* male and female *generally* whose way of acting in life for the sake of God meets with God's approval. In the case of Ibrāhīm, in addition to the 40 items mentioned in the *āyahs* above, he was also tried, before and after he attained to prophethood, by his experience with the nature of the sun, the moon, and the stars; by his being cast into the blazing fire; by his migration from his native land; by the sacrifice of his son; and by his self-circumcision in old age. He was also tried by his many arguments on the nature of God, i.e. *tawḥīd*, against his father, his people, and Namrud; by the rites of the pilgrimage; and generally by his submission to the

Will of God. These matters to which the *kalimāt* refer have been itemized to a total of more than 50 items. We acknowledge with due respect the classical commentators for enlightening us on the matters to which the *kalimāt* mentioned in 2:124 refer. However, in the foregoing pages of this discourse we have given our own supplementary interpretation of events to which the *kalimāt* also refer, giving to them their ultimate significance in the history of mankind.

We have interpreted Ibrāhīm's remarkable journey to the Hijāz to abandon his wife Hājar and their baby son Ismā'il in a precise location there as having an ultimate significance in the history of mankind. We have shown that the sequence of events that followed in a natural way revealed the unfolding of God's plan foretelling a future event of the highest importance in the fulfillment of the Covenant which the descendants of the Children of Ādam has sealed with God. This momentuous future event would bring about the realization of the last and final phase in the evolvement of God's religion that He revealed in various stages to His Prophets and Messengers, to Nūḥ, then to Ibrāhīm and his sons Ismā'il and Ishāq, then to Ya'qūb-Isrā'il and the Prophets of the Children of Isrā'il to 'Īsā, and finally to Muḥammad, the Seal of all the Prophets of God. The realization of the last and final phase in the evolvement of God's religion in various stages was initiated by the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān to Muḥammad, the Seal of the Revelation, who was entrusted by God to gather together whatever remained of the substance of the core of the religion of all the Prophets of God revealed in the Qur'ān, and to integrate them into the universal religion that he brought. It pleased God to give to this universal religion the name of *al-islām*.

In the foregoing pages of this discourse we have proven the falseness of the claim that the word *islām* existed before being revealed in the Qur'ān. We have also contradicted the related issues raised by those who make that claim in connection with the words *islām*, *aslama*, and *muslim*. Their deceptive mode of reasoning in extrapolating the idea in the Qur'ān that the word *muslim* already implied *islām* to suit their own scheme is but a reformulation of the preconceived idea of the transcendent unity of religions which we



have contradicted twenty-five years ago. But this time they have irreverently made use of the Holy Qur'ān itself to convey their delusive ideas that confuse and alter the meanings of the terms *islām*, *muslim*, and *aslama*. This alteration is brought about initially when the word *islām* in all the eight instances in which it is found in the Qur'ān is converted in translation into a transitive verb given the meaning of submission in a general sense. Then the word *islām* is removed from the translated text of the *āyahs* concerned and substituted with the word 'submission'. This substitute is then slipped into the text of the whole translation of the Qur'ān, letting the text of the Qur'ān give contexture to it as the translation takes its pace. In this way the impression is given that their translation of the true meanings intended by the focus word *islām* and the key words *aslama* and *muslim* in the Qur'ān accurately reflect what is intended by the very Qur'ān itself. But that is false. They have disguised as true a farrago of falsehood. They have confused the meanings of the focus word *islām* and the key words *aslama* and *muslim* contrary to the meanings given to them in the Qur'ān. With regard to the meaning of the word *islām* in all the eight instances in which it is found in the Qur'ān, we have explained that according to the evidence of the texts themselves it refers to religion, *dīn*, in the sense of belief and faith, *īmān*, in One God, without partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule, to Whom worship is due. The notion of worship already indicates that submission, *aslama*, is inseparable from religion because it is necessarily concomitant with religion. Being concomitant with religion does not mean that submission is identical with religion because logically there is a priority-posteriority relationship between them, and religion takes precedence over submission. Indeed *islām*, meaning religion, precedes submission not only logically, but historically as well. The meaning conveyed by the word *islām* cannot be erroneously reduced to submission because it is the source of the principle of submission. We will demonstrate the truth concluding the subject of this discourse on the subject of the words *aslama*, *muslim*, and *islām* in what follows.

It is assumed by the chief editor and his main translator and commentator of the most recent (2015, USA) English translation

and commentary of the Holy Qur'ān, as well as by his team of translators and editors, and others, that the name *Islām* is given to the religion brought by the Prophet Muḥammad because the word *islām* means submission in a general sense, and in that sense submission is common to all religions so that its universality is clearly indicated. Submission is thought to be a universal concept applicable to all religions in every case under consideration. Therefore they assert that the word *islām* in the *āyah* which says: "Whoever seeks a religion other than *islām* it shall not be accepted of him" (*Āli Imrān* (3):85), is translated as: "Whoever seeks a religion other than *submission* it shall not be accepted of him". This translation completely disregards the clear indication that God is there speaking about *religion* and not about a grammatical entity such as a verbal noun which regards only the word, not the idea or even a transitive verb. We ask: Does religion other than submission exist? Since it is assumed that submission as a universal concept is common to all religions, the answer to our question must be: 'No', such religion does not exist. But here God is speaking, and for God to 'not accept' a religion that does not exist is absurd, for to 'not accept' means that whatever it is that is not accepted *must* exist. So the answer to our question should be: 'Yes', religion other than submission does indeed exist. Supposing in this translation of that *āyah* the word *dīn* is interpreted also as *submission* and not as *religion*, which is in fact already implied, then the translation would now read: "Whoever seeks a *submission* (*dīn*) other than *submission* (*islām*) it shall not be accepted of him." A submission that is other than submission can only refer to a submission that is not genuine, a submission that is counterfeit, that is false, that is a corrupt version of true submission. In the Qur'ān God refers to this kind of submission as 'unwilling submission', i.e. *aslama karhan*. We have already explained this matter not only in the foregoing pages of this book, but even in our earlier books and lectures of over 40 years ago. We explained that it refers to submission in the *millah* of religions that are products of human intervention of the revealed religion of the original *millah* of all the Prophets; an intervention that interferes with the very essence of true monotheism. True submission is what the word *islām* in that *āyah* refers to. Not only

that, the words 'other than' i.e. *ghayra*, distinguish the word *islām* (submission), from any other form of submission, meaning that as a mark of distinction to show that *islām* is the principle or standard of submission by which the authenticity of submission in religion, in whatever form, is judged. The source of this principle cannot be in the submission, but in the religion in which the submission occurs. Therefore the word *islām* there cannot refer to *submission*, but refers to *religion* named by that word; and the word *dīn* there cannot be interpreted as submission because what it refers to is the religion of Islām as the word *islām* there indicates. Moreover, the word *yabtaghi* there implies that the 'seeking' in "Whoever seeks a religion....." is already a deviation from the truth. What God is saying there is not the meaning of *islām* as a grammatical form but that the religion of Islām is the criterion by which the truth in religion is judged. The truth in religion, that is the cause of the judgement to authenticate, is the firm belief and faith in One God asserting that He is the only God; and since this affirmation of belief and faith in the One and only God is made manifest and realized by God's Messenger Muḥammad the Seal of the Prophets as verified in the Qur'ān, the holy Prophet is inseparable from the truth that is affirmed. Obedience to God means also obedience to His Last Prophet.

We have demonstrated above the error of translating the word *islām*, prefixed with the article *al* in *āyah* (*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 85) as 'submission'. There is no need for us to rebut similar translations of the seven other *āyahs* in question: (*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 19), (*Al-Mā'idah* (5): 3), (*Al-An'ām* (6): 125), (*Al-Zumar* (39): 22), and (*Al-Ṣaff*(61): 7); as well as those without the prefix: (*Al-Tawbah* (9): 74), and (*Al-Hujurat* (49): 17). The rebuttal above is already sufficient to show that the word *islām* cannot be reduced to mean 'submission' when it is the whole of the religion that is meant by it. The religion of Islām is more than what can be encompassed by the meaning conveyed by a single vague and ambiguous word like 'submission', even if we consider its intended meaning within the context of the whole translation of the Qur'ān. Indeed, within the context of the whole of the translation of the Qur'ān its intended meaning would still not refer to submission in itself, but would invariably refer to the

higher truth of revealed religion, whether in its initial form in the *dīn al-qayyim* of the original *millah* of all the Prophets earlier than the Last, or in its final form in the *dīn al-ḥaqq* of the *millah* of the Last Prophet. What is this higher truth? It is the *kalimah shahādah* organized and realized as a consummate institution of belief, faith and worship forming a permanent worldview due to a Universal Religion: *al-Islām*.

It is only in the Holy Qur'ān, and nowhere else, that not only the *concept* but the *reality* of a universal submission to the One and only God is found revealed. Other Scriptures of religions other than Islām do not even admit of the fundamental universal role of submission, whether as an act or as an actuality, in their systems of belief, faith, and worship. Our objection is therefore obviously not on the meaning of the word *islām* from a strictly linguistic point of view being translated as 'submission', both in the sense of the verb *aslama* and its cognates, and in the sense of its verbal noun. But we do object to the semantic sleight of confusing the verbal noun with the verb and applying this confusion to submission in religions thereby confusing the religion of God with that which is other than it, so that the fundamental difference in the quality of the submission is erased. Therefore we strongly object to the removal from the text of the translation the name *al-Islām* or *Islām* in all the *āyahs* referred to above, and its substitution by the word 'submission' whether the initial letter is printed in capital or in the lower case. The name *al-Islām* was chosen by God for the religion not because it conveys a universal concept that is assumed to be common to all religions, but because the religion itself is the *source* of the *principle* of submission in religion. For such a principle there can only be one source: a religion made most perfect by God for mankind; *akmalu lakum dīnakum*, upon whom and by it He has completed His favour; *wa atmamtu 'alaykum ni'matī*, a religion that is the source of the principle of submission, a universal religion; *wa raḍītu lakum al-Islāma dīnan*.

The universality of Islam is due to the religion itself of Islām that is universal. It was in God's plan from the very beginning to appoint the Prophet Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets and of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, as the universal Messenger to



mankind to establish the universal religion. The form of religion of the original *millah* of the Prophets before Islām was meant to be the form of religion for their own respective peoples not for mankind as a whole, and was not the same for everyone of them. What was the same was the substance of the core of their religion. Because of the sameness of this core in the religion of the *millah* of the Prophets the Qur'ān refers to their religion as having the same identity as an 'upright religion', a *dīnan qayyiman*. Islām, in its early stages of formation in the *millah* of the Prophet Muḥammad resembled the *millah* of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. In the early years of argument and confrontation against pagans, hypocrites, Jews and Christians, and several battles later, the holy Prophet with God's aid, guidance, admonition and encouragement, and his own exemplary statesmanship, brought about the transformation of his *millah* into an institution with its own rites, rules and regulations, and laws governing them, its own Community, its own Divine Law that altogether consolidated the institution as a universal religion. Islām was no longer a *millah*, it was *dīn* in the full sense of the term, and was therefore not the same as the religion of the earlier Prophets except for the core of the religion. We have already explained that this core was originally conceived by God as the *formula* that was the very spirit of Islām to be externally and historically realized in the religion brought by the holy Prophet who would finally make it manifest over all religion that 'there is no God but Allāh'. To him God delegated His authority to gather together whatever remained of the teaching that God had enjoined to the earlier Prophets from Nūḥ to 'Īsā revealed in the Qur'ān, and to confirm that there is no difference between any of the teaching of the Prophets of God, and to incorporate them into his religion. He was authorized to make laws for the religion he brought and to establish it as a universal religion on the foundation of the Divine Law.

Thus, following the direction of the holy Prophet, the universality of Islām is therefore clearly indicated in its gathering together into a unity with itself whatever remained of the teaching of all the earlier Prophets from Nūḥ to 'Īsā revealed in the Qur'ān that God had enjoined to fulfill the obligation due to Him in matters of belief, faith, and worship; and in its confirming of

the truth of their teaching, incorporating the truth with its own by affirming that there is no difference between the teaching of any of the Prophets of God. In this way the religion of Islām had accomplished the fulfillment of the Covenant of the Prophets with God, i.e. of Nūḥ, of Ibrāhīm, of Mūsā, and of 'Īsā (*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 81), and finally of Muḥammad himself (*Al-Aḥzāb* (33): 7).

There is something about the universality of Islām that is unique and truly universal. It is a universality that transcends the concept of universality that is limited to the world of sense and sensible experience. In *āyah* 84 of *sūrah* 43 of *Al-Zukhruf* God declares that He is *ilāh* in the Heaven and *ilāh* on the Earth. The term *ilāh* refers to God as the *focus* on Whom the obedience, attention, and worship of His creatures are concentrated. When the Heaven and the Earth were yet unformed and separated in the cognitive presence of God, the Qur'ān tells us that God, comprehending His design, said to them: "*atīyā ṭaw'an aw karhan*": "Come together both of you (into external existence) willingly or unwillingly." They came saying: "*ataynā ṭā'i'in*": "We come in willing obedience." (*Fuṣṣilat* (41): 11). Then God completed their creation in seven firmaments or heavens, *samāwāt*, and assigned to each its duty and command, and adorned the heaven of the earth, *al-samā' al-dunyā*, with luminous celestial bodies and secured it with guard (*Fuṣṣilat* (41): 12; *Al-Nāzi'āt* (79): 27–32). Thus all that comprise the Heaven and the Earth is the entire universe together with all its parts: the stars, the moon, the sun, and other planets and beings in the Heaven; the mountains, rivers, trees, rocks, fish, birds, every thing in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms of nature on the Earth, and the earth itself – all recognize and acknowledge God as the One and only *ilāh* in the whole universe. God says that the seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory; that there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; (*Al-Isrā'* (17): 44); that everything renders Him worship (*Al-Baqarah* (2): 116); that to Him submits, *aslama*, whatever is in the heavens and on the earth (*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 83). What this means is that they are all *muslim*, at one with Islām, and together all proclaim with one universal voice: *lā ilāha illa Allāh*.

*Allāh* is a name, *ism*, designating the Essence and the Self of the Most Exalted Being Who calls Himself by that name. It is a name denoting the true and real Existent; a summary of the attributes of Divinity; descriptive of the qualities of Lordship; a single entity necessarily existing by itself as a real, not metaphorical existence; it is a proper name of the true and real God, comprising all the Divine Names, comprehending all the essences of existing things; it is the greatest name to which all the ninety-nine Beautiful Names of God belong; it is a name that gathers together unto itself the meaning of a universal dominion of an awesome almightiness of Lordship over the whole of Creation as 'Lord of all the Worlds'; and it is as 'Allāh, Lord of all the Worlds', that the Most Exalted identifies Himself. *Allāh* is therefore a very special name, none other possesses the requisite to be like it.

The name *Allāh* did not originate from any language. Language according to its conception in the Qur'ān is understood in three specific senses: (i), as *lughah*, i.e. language in a general sense applicable to all mankind, e.g. Arabic language, Persian language, Turkish language, Malay language, etc.; (ii), as *lisān*, i.e. language in a particular sense peculiar to the tongue of a people, e.g. Arab tongue, Persian tongue, Turkish tongue, Malay tongue, etc. The tongue is the organ used in speech in a manner of pronunciation, linguistic taste and usage peculiar to the racial characteristic of a particular people; and (iii), as *kalām*, i.e. language as words uttered and articulated in the speech of every people among the peoples of mankind, e.g. Arabic speech, Persian speech, Turkish speech, Malay speech, etc. So when we state that the name *Allāh* did not originate from any language, we mean from all the senses in which language is understood according to its conception in the Qur'ān.

A name, *ism*, is a word, *kalimah*, that points to an object of thought by which the object is known. Considered in its written form the word is a symbolic form consisting of an arrangement of letters representing articulated sounds. Considered in this way the word, *lafz*, is not substantive. We have already shown above that the name *Allāh* is a very special name and that no other name exists that has the special qualities required to be like it. The name *Allāh* is original. It is the name by which the Most Exalted named Himself. It is ever identifying itself with the named because it is not other than the named. Therefore it is not a name to be regarded like any other name, or as an ordinary name, or to be treated as a form of the verb *fa'ala* in order to establish the origin or derivation of an idea expressed in writing whose letters can be disassembled and reassembled to form another word to settle a point at issue. It is said that the name *Allāh* (الله) is originally Al-ilāh (الإله). Then because it is deemed 'heavy' or awkward to articulate it syntactically, the *hamzah* of the disjunctive *alif* is suppressed; then the first *lām* is incorporated into the second *lām* making two *lāms* joined together; then the sign of the stress is put above them to read the word '*Allāh*'. But all this talk of derivation, *ishtiqaq*, and etymology, *taṣrīf*, of the name *Allāh* is nothing but a thing contrived and an affectation that has no relevance whatsoever to the affirmation based on the evidence in the Qur'ān that the name *Allāh* did not originate from any language. The name *Allāh* was revealed by the Most Exalted about Himself when religion, *dīn*, was first being revealed by Him to mankind through the earliest of His Prophets and Messengers. Religion involves worship and adoration and it was then that the name *Allāh* was introduced into a language, the language of Ādam, the first man and earliest of God's Prophets and Messengers.

Religion pertains to the fulfillment of the obligation for the Children of Ādam and their descendants to confirm their acknowledgement of Allāh's Lordliness over them, i.e. His *rabbaniyyah*, to submit to Him as His servant, '*abd*', by their acknowledgement of His Godliness upon them, i.e. His *ilāhiyyah*, to serve and worship Him as a singular God without partner, rival or equal with Him and His rule. It is due to Allāh's Divinity that becomes manifest in the external world of sense and sensible



experience as the singular God that a singular and genderless *ilāh* is attributed to that God. The name *Allāh* with reference to this God was already known to the Prophet Ādam more than a thousand years before the existence of the original Arabs, the ‘*arab al-‘āribah*’, and their spoken language and later their invention of the Arabic script to make possible a written language for them to assemble letters into words. It is therefore absolutely not true that the name *Allāh* is “originally” *Al-ilāh* and it is impossible for it to be “derived” from the word *ilāh*. Let us explain the matter further.

Ādam was the earliest of Allāh’s Prophets and according to a *ḥadīth* he was also a Messenger and received some leafs on which God’s messages of guidance and instruction were recorded by him. But due to the remoteness of his being and environment he was a Messenger only in a limited sense to his sons and their wives and children who were with him before they increased in number to congregate and segregate into tribes to form a tribal community that could be referred to as a ‘people’. According to a *ḥadīth* it took about ten centuries after the Prophet Ādam before the descendants of Shīth, the third son of Ādam after Hābil was killed, and from whom the Prophet Nūḥ was descended, began to segregate to form a tribal community as a separate people, while the rest had become extinct. In the beginning the generations continued to follow God’s guidance and instructions as handed down to them from their fathers. But gradually, due to being left without a Messenger to guide them under changing circumstances, the generations one after another began to forget and ignore God’s guidance and instructions and to cease to worship Him in favor of the worship of idols with the rites and ceremonies that they themselves have invented. The first Messenger to be sent by God Most Exalted to a people before the Flood was the Prophet Nūḥ whose people worshiped idols. His mission was to preach repentance to his people and to convey to them God’s message to worship only Him. The Prophet Nūḥ preached, and this was what he said in his important opening exhortation to them: “O my people - worship Allāh!, you do not have a true *ilāh* among any of the gods that you worship other than Him”. The words in the Qur’ān which we have translated above reads: “*Yā ‘qawmī’ budū*

*’l-Lāha mā la-kum min ilāhin ghayru-hu*” (7:59). We do not know in what language the Prophet Nūḥ delivered his exhortation to his people. Whatever Adamic language it was, the words said must have conveyed *exactly* the same meaning of what is conveyed in the Qur’ān in Arabic. So it was in this case as God Wills. This remarkable fact is proven centuries later after the Flood, when the descendants of Sām, the Prophet Nūḥ’s eldest son, who were the original Arabs who spoke linguistically pure Arabic, i.e. the Prophet Ḥūd (al-*A’rāf* (7): 65), and the Prophet Ṣāliḥ (7: 73, said exactly the same words to their people the ‘Ād and the Thamūd; “*Yā ‘qawmī’ budū’l-Lāha mā la-kum min ilāhin ghayru-hu*”. The same words as those of the Prophets Ḥūd and Ṣāliḥ were said two thousand years after them by the third Arab Prophet of antiquity, the Prophet Shu‘ayb (7: 85) to his people of Madyān. Counting from the time of the Prophet Nūḥ and what he said to his people repeated by the Arab Prophets of antiquity to their people, note that the words *mā la-kum min ilāhin ghayru-hu*: ‘you do not have a true *ilāh* among any of the gods that you worship other than Him’ constitute the most ancient version of the *kalimah shahādah*: *lā ilāha illā Allāh* that would be formulated more than four thousand years later by the fourth and last Arab Prophet Muḥammad. The phrase *mā la-kum min ilāhin ghayru-hu* shows clearly the fundamental difference between the conception of *ilāh* preached by the Prophet Nūḥ and by the ancient Arab Prophets, and the conception of *ilāh* understood and practiced by the idolaters in the time of Nūḥ and the ancient Arab Prophets carried on to the time of the Jāhiliyyah when the pagan Arab *ilāh* was finally overthrown by the preaching of the Prophet Muḥammad.

With reference to the phrase cited above, the call of the Prophets and Messengers of God to worship Allāh alone means by ‘worship’ to serve, ‘*abada*’, Allāh as befits a servant that belongs to Him alone, for only He possesses the true and real Divinity to be so served. The new concept of *ilāh* originates from Allāh’s attributes of Divinity, i.e. His *ilāhiyyah*, that He ascribes to Himself as a singular God without partner, rival, or equal with Him and His rule. As a Divinity whose right it is to be worshipped, Allāh is Himself the *ilāh* or true focus of worship that draws towards Himself and impresses

His Presence upon the worshipper's concentration, attention, awe and reverential fear as a rule of action or conduct in the psychology of worship, i.e. *'ibādah*. The worshipper is made aware that Allāh actually *sees* him in his act of worship, *hears* him celebrate His praise, *knows* what he reveals and conceals in his very self, and *takes account* of them to forgive or to punish whoever He Wills. *Ilāh*, revealed in the Qur'ān as the Divinity, is singular not plural, conforming itself with the absolute Oneness of the nature of Allāh as God. It is applicable only to God. Its applicable range of sway is not only on the Earth, but in the Heaven as well. This extra-mundane character of *ilāh* attributed to Allāh is clearly stated in the Qur'ān (*al-Zukhruf* (43): 84). In contrast, the *ilāh* of the idolaters and pagan Arabs was a plurality. Everything was an object of worship, *ma'būd*: angel, animal, plant, stone, fire, sun, moon, star, *et cetera*. They had masculine and feminine gender among the gods worshipped. The range of application of their *ilāh* was mundane. They knew of Allāh and included Him among their idols, but did not worship Him as an *ilāh*. According to the testimony of the Qur'ān they acknowledged that Allāh created the heavens and the earth, and subjected the sun and the moon to His Law (*al-ʿAnkabūt* (29): 61); that He sends down rain from the sky, and gives life to the earth after its death (29: 63). But they did not worship Him as God.

This brings us back to what was said to the ancestors of the pagan Arabs, the ʿĀd, Thamūd, and Madyān, by all the Arab Prophets of antiquity, by Hūd, and Ṣāliḥ, then by Shuʿayb. They were told to worship Allāh alone because they “do not have among any of their gods a true *ilāh* other than Him”: *mā la-kum min ilāhin ghayru-hu*. The Qur'ān refers to them and to their ancestors the *awwalūn* (*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 81) when referring to the same kind of situation they were in with respect to their belief in the time of the Jāhiliyyah. We said that they knew who Allāh is according to the testimony of the Qur'ān: if you ask them to whom belong the earth and all beings therein, they will say, ‘to Allāh’ (23: 84-85); if you ask them who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne of all-encompassing sovereignty, they will say, ‘Allāh’ (23: 86-87); if you ask them in whose hand is the mighty dominion over all things and He protects while nobody can

protect against Him, they will say, ‘in Allāh’s hand and His power’ (23: 88-89). Yet they did not worship Him as *ilāh*. In fact since the ancient time of the ʿĀd down to the time of the Jāhiliyyah just before the rise of Islām, *ilāh* derived from the verbal root *alaha* with the meaning ‘*abada*, originally referred to everything worshipped, *ma'būd*. Then due to the preaching of the Prophet Muḥammad when he brought Islām, the worship of that kind of *ilāh* was finally overcome and replaced by the worship of the true God *al-ma'būd bi'l-ḥaqq*. The holy Prophet brought a new and different conception of *ilāh* among the Arabs, a conception of *ilāh* that owes its origin from the name *Allāh* considered in His aspect as the sum of the attributes of Divinity, i.e. His *ilāhiyyah*.

As for those who insist on saying that the name, i.e. *ism*, of ‘Allāh’ is originally ‘Al-ilāh’, or that the name ‘Allāh’ is derived from the word *ilāh*, they have misconstrued the correct meaning of the explanation given by the most authoritative grammarian about this matter of the name ‘Allāh’. We refer to the great commentary of the Holy Qur'ān from the point of view of Arabic grammar and orthography by al-Bayḍāwī. He did not say that the name ‘Allāh’ is originally ‘Al-ilāh’, nor did he say that the name ‘Allāh’ is derived from the word *ilāh*. What he said is that when the *ism*, i.e. the name, ‘Allāh’ is treated as a *lafẓ*, i.e. an uttered word, its verbal root, *aṣluhu*, not its origin, is the word *ilāh*; then from the word *ilāh* take away the *ḥamzah* and incorporate *alif* and *lām* to it so that it leads to the *lafẓ* ‘*Yā Allāh*’ being uttered with a special purpose to refer exclusively to Allāh worshipped as the true object of worship, *al-ma'būd bi'l-ḥaqq*. He also said that a name, *ism*, when taken as a *lafẓ* is not the thing named, i.e. the *musamma*, because a *lafẓ* consists of intermitten sounds occurring continuously and differently according to the difference among people, and in time; sometime as multiple, and as single at another time. The thing named is not like that. However, when *ism* is taken to mean the essence or *dhāt* of a thing, then it is the *musamma*; but this meaning of *ism* being identical with the *musamma* is not widely known.

Our comment on this statement that the meaning of *ism* being identical with the *musamma* is “not widely known” is perhaps because the subject was brought up during the very early stages of



Muslim intellectual development for it to become widely known. We refer to the early formative period of rational discussion and debate on the fundamental articles of belief and faith to establish the truth approved by the majority of people who follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet. This intellectual activity marked the origin of the *kalām* as dialectic developed into a theological method whose founder was Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 302H). One of the important problems discussed was the problem of the *reality* of the Essential Attributes, *al-ṣifāt*, which is closely connected with the problem of the identity between the *ism* and the *musamma* mentioned above. It is the intellectual refinement required to understand this problem that the meaning of *ism* as identical with *musamma* was not widely known.

Then, citing what the Most Exalted said about His name: “Blessed be the name of your Lord” (*al-Raḥmān* (55): 78), and “Glorify the name of your Lord” (*al-A‘lā* (87): 1), al-Bayḍāwī explained that this shows *ism* to be a *lafẓ*, and such being the case, just as it is incumbent to exalt and purify the Essence and Attributes of the Most Exalted Being against any short coming, so is it incumbent to extol all *lafẓ* related to them against any misdemeanour and bad *adab*. This statement of al-Bayḍāwī implies that there are two kinds of *lafẓ*: an ordinary kind, and an extraordinary kind. The name ‘Allāh’, when treated as a *lafẓ*, that *lafẓ* is no longer considered to be an ordinary *lafẓ* because it relates to a name, *ism*, designating the Essence and Attributes of the Most Exalted Self. It is clear that in the case mentioned above, it shows *ism* to be a *lafẓ* because the act of blessing and glorifying the Most Exalted, of earnestly requesting His assistance and protection is done by invoking His name. It implies the *ism*, presently a *lafẓ*, to be originally a *ṣifah*. Then it follows that according to al-Bayḍāwī taking *ism* to be a *ṣifah* like the view of al-Ash‘arī who subdivided *ism* considered as a *ṣifah* in the following manner: (i) in what way is the *ism* considered as a *ṣifah*, i.e. an attribute, the very self of the essence; (ii) in what way is the *ism* considered as an attribute ‘other’ than the essence; and (iii) in what way is the *ism* considered as an attribute neither the essence itself nor other than the ‘other’ than the essence itself.

Our explanation of what al-Ash‘arī the Mutakallim meant in his remarks stated in items (i), (ii), and (iii) above lies in the nature of the Divine Names, *al-asmā’*. All the Divine Names, notwithstanding the fact that some are contraries of others, are identical with the Essence Itself when they refer to the Essence Itself. But since each of the Divine Names is in reality naming a special aspect or particular form of the Essence in the variety and multiplicity of His manifestations at the various levels of existence, each when pointing to its own intrinsic meaning is describing only that special aspect or particular form and not the Essence as It is in Itself and is not then identical with the Essence, and each is not identical with the rest of the Divine Names. Thus every Divine Name, while being on the one hand identical with God and so with all the other Divine Names, is on the other hand an independent meaning in itself. When considered by itself independently of the Essence, a Divine Name is regarded as an Attribute.

Every Attribute is a reality, and not something existing only in the mind, that describes according to its own intrinsic meaning a special aspect or particular form of God. All the Essential Attributes of Divinity which become manifest in the external world are: Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Speech, Hearing, and Sight. These Attributes subsist from eternity in and by the Essence. They are identical with God when they point to God. But since each of them is describing a special aspect or particular form of God in His various manifestations, each when pointing to its own intrinsic meaning is describing only that special aspect or particular form and not God as He is in Himself and is not then identical with God, and each is not identical with the rest of the Divine Attributes. Thus every Divine Attribute while being on the one hand identical with God and so with all the other Divine Attributes, is on the other hand an independent meaning in itself.

If this is understood then it will become clear that the meaning intended in items (ii) and (iii) above is to prove the reality of the Attributes; that the Essence is living by means of its personal Attribute of Life, knowing through Knowledge, powerful through Power, willing through Will, speaking through Speech, hearing through Hearing and seeing through Sight, as against the views

of the Falāsifah and the Mu‘tazilah who denied the reality of the Attributes maintaining that the Attributes are really the Essence. This is not the proper place to go into the details of the *kalām* which is best explained by the Mutakallimūn themselves. Here we will only give a gist of what al-Ash‘arī meant by his remarks in items (ii) and (iii) above of which a summary of the background has just been explained.

In what way is the Attribute ‘other’, *ghayr*, than the Essence (ii)? When it is pointing to the Essence describing the Essence by its own intrinsic meaning, then it is ‘other’ than the Essence Itself. It is ‘other’ because although its description does not completely describe the Essence Itself it is still the Essence that is being described according to the aspect that is conveyed by its own intrinsic meaning. It cannot be said that the Attribute is ‘not’, *laysa*, describing the Essence, since it is only describing a particular aspect or form of the Essence. Every Attribute is different from one another because each has its own different meaning which describes the Essence according to one of the various modes of the Essence which corresponds to the description. The expression *ghayr*, i.e. ‘other’, is meant to affirm the validity of the Attribute’s description as well as its function as an Attribute thereby implying the reality of the Attribute itself.

Then in what way is the Attribute ‘neither’, *laysa*, the Essence nor other than the ‘other’ than the Essence (iii)? When it is pointing to itself describing its own intrinsic meaning to itself the Attribute is then affirming its own independent existence as an Attribute each distinct from one another. Their existence is something common to all of them, but it is not the commonness of *existence* that defines each Attribute to be ‘that by which it is itself’; it is rather its being-distinct from one another that defines the Attribute to be *that* by which it is itself as an independent Attribute. At this point of our discourse regarding the name, *ism*, ‘Allāh’, we maintain the correctness of our view that it is not proper to insist as final treating the *ism* ‘Allāh’ as a *lafẓ*. The truth is that treated as a *lafẓ* the *ism*, implied by the missing syntactical part - the part pertaining to the true identity of Allāh - is originally a *ṣifah* and not a *lafẓ*. Only as a *ṣifah*, an Attribute is the *ism*, even though treated as a *lafẓ*, identical with the *musamma*.

We will now resolve the problem stated in item (i), i.e. in what way is the *ism* considered as an attribute the very self of the essence. In other words how is the *ism* the very self of the *musamma*. We said in the beginning of our interpretation of the name *Allāh* that a name, *ism*, is a word, a *kalimah* that points to an object of thought by which the object is known, and that the word uttered, the *lafẓ*, is a symbolic form consisting of an arrangement of letters representing articulated sounds. When considered in itself as symbolic, we said that the word is not substantive. But the name *Allāh* taken as a word is not like that. It is ever-pointing to a single object only and is inseparable from its object. It is the name by which the Most Exalted named Himself in such a way that it is ever identifying itself with the named so that it is not other than the named. Therefore, in the true sense of the word ‘Allāh’ is not an ordinary name. ‘Allāh’ is the name by which the Most Exalted identifies Himself. What evidence from the Qur’ān can we produce to prove the truth of our assertion. We refer to the story of the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount (*al-Qaṣaṣ* (28): 29-30).

The Prophet Mūsā saw a fire in the direction of Mount Ṭūr. But when he came to it, a voice was heard from the right bank of the valley, from a tree in hallowed ground: “O Mūsā! Verily I am Allāh, the Lord of all the Worlds”: *yā Mūsā innī anā’l-Lāhu rabbu’l-‘ālamīn* (28: 30). Then as he approached the Fire the voice said: “Blessed are those in the Fire and those around, and glory to Allāh Lord of all the Worlds. O Mūsā! Verily I am Allāh, the Exalted in Might, the Wise!”: *yā Mūsā innahū anā’l-Lāhu’l-‘azīzu’l-ḥakīm* (*al-Naml* (27): 8-9). Then the voice said: “O Mūsā! I am your Lord”: *yā Mūsā innī anā rabbuka* - therefore (in My presence) put off your sandals, you are in the sacred valley Ṭūwā. I have chosen you, listen then to the revelation (sent to you) (*Ṭā Hā* (20): 11-13). Verily I, I am Allāh, there is no God but I” - *inna-nī anā’l-Lāhu lā ilāha illā anā* - so serve Me alone, and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise (20: 14).

This most important historic Call of the Most Exalted, identifying Himself as Allāh to the Prophet Mūsā, is revealed separately in the Qur’ān in three *sūrahs*, namely: *al-Qaṣaṣ*, *al-Naml*, and *Ṭā Hā*. According to the context of the Qur’ānic texts this



extraordinary event occurred at the same time and in the same location. Therefore in the above paragraph we have assembled them together as a whole to give emphasis on the name 'Allāh', not as a *lafẓ* but as a *ṣifah*. When *ism*, i.e. a name, is treated as a *lafẓ* the name is not the thing named i.e. the *musamma*, because a *lafẓ* consists of sounds without substance and the thing named is not like that. But when the name is taken to mean the *dhāt* or essence of the thing named, then that name is identical with the thing named. In the case referred to above, the word 'Allāh' is a name designating the Essence of the Most Exalted Self. 'Allāh' is not merely an ordinary name, but a name that gathers together unto itself the various meanings of all the Divine Names. Every Divine Name is different from one another because each has a different meaning that describes one of the aspects of God Most Exalted that corresponds to the description. Supposing all the Divine Names together simultaneously point to God Most Exalted, then at that instant they would be describing completely all the aspects of the Most Exalted as He is in Himself and would thus be identical with Him. 'Allāh' is a name that gathers together unto itself all the Divine Names *at that instant* when they simultaneously come together naming God in toto becoming identical with Him and also with themselves.

'Allāh' is also a name considered as an attribute, not just any attribute, but an Attribute of the Essence that gathers together unto itself the various modes of the Attributes of perfection inherent in the Essence of the Most Exalted Self. Every Attribute is different from one another, each describes one of the modes of the Essence of the Most Exalted Self. When all the Attributes together simultaneously point to the Essence, then at that instant they would become identical with the Essence and with themselves. Thus the word 'Allāh' considered both as a name as well as an attribute contains the meanings of all the Divine Names as well as the descriptions of the modes of the Attributes of perfection inherent in the Essence.

Considered as itself the word 'Allāh' is unique. In the Call of the Most Exalted, identifying Himself as Allāh He is referred to by the most supreme designation of distinction as *rabb al-*

*‘ālamīn*. Then after that by another designation of distinction as *al-‘azīzu’l-ḥakīm*. Our view is that this latter designation refers to Allāh's Attributes of perfection regarding His almightiness and wisdom revealed in *Sūrah al-Hashr* (59: 22-24). This *sūrah* begins and ends with *al-‘azīzu’l-ḥakīm*. There at the end we find it stated: "Allāh is He than Whom there is no other God. He knows the Unseen and the Seen; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful (22). Allāh is He than Whom there is no other God, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glory to Allāh! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. (23). He is Allāh the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever is in the heavens and on the earth does declare His Praises and Glory, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise! (24) (*al-‘azīz al-ḥakīm*). There is meaningful sequence in this Call of the Most Exalted Self. First He said *anā’l-Lāhu rabbu’l-‘ālamīn*; then He said *anā’l-Lāhu’l-‘azīzu’l-ḥakīm* followed by an apostrophic *anā rabbuka*; and finally He said *anā’l-Lāhu lā ilāha illā anā*, passing from the *rabbaniyyah* to the *ilāhiyyah*. As regards *anā rabbuka* we think that it was not only meant for Mūsā at that time, but also for every one of the Children of Ādam and their descendants who had heard the same words on the Day of *Alastu*. It was an allusion to the original Covenant Allāh made with mankind when His name was yet unknown to them but was about to be made known to them here on earth.

We have already said that the name Allāh did not originate from any language, and that the name Allāh was revealed by the Most Exalted about Himself when religion, *dīn*, was first revealed by Him to mankind. We have also stated much earlier in our discourse about religion, that from the very beginning of Revelation religion was revealed to the Prophets in stages of formation and completion according to prevailing historical circumstance and the time and place in which the Prophets lived. Since the time of Nūḥ religion was revealed initially in a rudimentary form which was gradually evolved by the Evolver through the *millah* of all the Prophets beginning with the *millah* of Ibrāhīm as an upright religion, a *dīnan*



*qayyiman*. From the *millah* of Ibrāhīm its evolvement was continued progressively through the *millah* of Mūsā, followed by other Prophets, then through the *millah* of ʿĪsā in complementary stages of completion from *millah* to *millah* until it reached the final stage of evolvement in the *millah* of Muḥammad, where it was transformed as a consummate *dīn* into the universal religion of Islām.

The religion of the Prophets from the time of Nūḥ, then from that of Ibrāhīm, then from that of Mūsā, to that of ʿĪsā was only to carry out what God had instructed them to do to form an upright religion for their own peoples in their respective languages in order to realize the obligatory legal and moral injunctions contained in the core of their religion. For every one of them God introduced laws, *shirʿah*, suited to their ways of life, *minḥāja* (*al-Māʿidah* (5): 48). Thus, in accordance with God's plan, the *form* of the religion of the *millah* of each of the Prophets was not the same. What was the same, in the form of their religion was the belief and faith in One and only God, the religion taking diverse forms while the belief and faith remained the same maintaining unity of belief and faith in a diversity of forms.

The name Allāh, the substance of the core of religion, was introduced into human language when religion was revealed to the Prophets here on earth for the purpose of worship and adoration, of prayer and invocation. But in the 'upright religion', the *dīnan qayyiman* of the Prophets in the form of *millah*, the substance of the core, after thousands of years of evolvement from the time of Nūḥ to that of ʿĪsā, was not yet defined in a set form of words, comprehensive and unambiguous, as the formula: *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*. This definition of true monotheism was reserved by the Most Exalted for His Last Prophet, sent with guidance and the 'religion of truth', the *dīn al-ḥaqq*, to make manifest over all religion. The 'religion of truth' brought by the Last Prophet became the universal religion intended for mankind.

In view of what we said above, our interpretation of the extra-ordinary Call of the Most Exalted to the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount is that the Call had a dual meaning: one, personal to the Prophet Mūsā, i.e. his prophethood, the Revelation sent to him, his *millah* and mission to his people among the Children of Isrāʾīl; the

other, the one more important, to make known to mankind for all time, the true and real identity of the Most Exalted Himself with Allāh the Lord, i.e. *rabb*, of all the Worlds, and the Divinity or God, i.e. *ilāh*, in Heaven and on Earth, to Whom belong all the Divine Names and Attributes of perfection.

The Voice of God that spoke, ref. *kalām*, to the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount came from the Tree on Fire. It was directed to his heart, i.e. *qalb*, the organ of spiritual cognition that has a power of impulse to apply an impelling force suddenly on the mind i.e. *ʿaql*, to produce action. In this case, action began with the agitation of the internal auditory senses effecting the external organs of hearing to function so that the Prophet 'heard' and paid attention to what the Voice was saying in order to act accordingly. In the Qurʾān (*al-Shūrā* (42): 51) God says that it is not for mortal man (*bashar*) that God should speak to him except by *wahy*, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger (i.e. Jibrīl) to reveal (*yūḥiya*) with His permission what He wills to reveal. In this context between God and man, *wahy* is revelation or sudden inspiration from God to the heart and mind, *fuʿād* of man to produce in man the action intended. It is a secret way of communication from God to man.

The way of communication by *wahy* is not only to man, but also to animals, and to every one of all the heavens, each for its separate laws and command. In the case of the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount, the Voice of God he 'heard' was a verbal *wahy* from behind a veil, i.e. from the Tree on Fire, speaking to him in a way of communication from a vertical, not horizontal, level of relationship. It is beyond the scope of grammar to attempt a ruling about the Voice of God in this case, because grammar operates at the horizontal, not vertical, level of communication relationship. It's ruling that the Voice of God is *lafẓ* is a mistake, because a *lafẓ* consists of sounds without substance. Whereas in this case the Voice did not say "in the name of God", but said "I am God". This was declared with emphasis: "Verily I, I am Allāh, there is no God but I."

With regard to the Call of the Most Exalted to the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount, we said that the Call had a dual meaning: one



personal to the Prophet Mūsā, the other of universal concern. This other meaning was to make known to mankind for all time, over all religion the true and real identity of the Most Exalted Self with Allāh, Lord, *rabb*, of all the Worlds and God, *ilāh*, in Heaven and on Earth to Whom belong all the Divine Names and Attributes of perfection inherent in the Essence of the Most Exalted Self. How would it be accomplished, this making known to mankind for all time over all religion that which was the substance of the core of revealed religion? It would be accomplished by the universal religion brought by the last Prophet who by God's leave would make it outwardly manifest as the *kalimah shahādah*.

With reference to our present concern, and in comparison with the way God spoke to the Prophet Mūsā on the Mount, by a verbal *wahy* from behind a veil in a vertical manner of communication relationship, the holy Prophet Muḥammad had a similar, i.e. verbal communication relationship with God during his Ascension, *mi'rāj* from behind a veil of the Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit, the *Sidratu'l-Muntahā* beyond which none may pass. But in the case of the holy Prophet the verbal communication relationship with God took place close to the summit of the vertical relationship, at a distance of "two bow-lengths or nearer" *Al-Najm* (53:9), i.e. two drawn bows with their chords touching, forming a circle bisected by the chords separating him from God. In such a close space of intimacy he could see through the chords and his heart and mind did not lie about what he saw (53:11). His sight did not waver nor go astray (53:17). He saw, of the Signs, *āyāt*, of his Lord, the Greatest (53:18). The *āyāt* here refers to God's manifestation forms, which in this case is His manifestation form as *ilāh*. The holy Prophet's *wahy* was verbal as well as visual. He was given three things: the obligatory daily prayers, the last *āyāhs* of *sūrah al-Baqarah*, and pardon for the habitual grave sinners in his Ummah who are being dragged down to perdition provided that they do not associate any partner with God.

Our account of the Prophet Mūsā's experience of a verbal *wahy* from behind a veil described in the Qur'ān in detail clearly shows that while the experience was spiritual, his body remained physically intact as body. It was spiritual because the experience

was directed to his heart, *qalb*, the organ of spiritual cognition that has a power of impulse to apply an impelling force suddenly on his mind, *'aql*, to produce action showing that the *wahy* from behind a veil is not only verbal but visual as well. The *qalb* working together with the *'aql* in this way is called *fu'ād*. In the Qur'ān there are only two instances in which a similar verbal and visual *wahy* from behind a veil is described in detail; the one of the Prophet Mūsā referred to above, and the other of the Prophet Muḥammad's Night Journey, *al-Isrā'*, followed by his Ascension, *mi'rāj*, to the Sidrah Tree of the Farthest Limit. Both, the Night Journey and the Ascension were taken to be bodily events by the majority of the Prophet's Companions and by people in general as well as by commentaries of the Qur'ān. It seems that the only evidence to prove the bodily events was the use in the Qur'ān of the terms *'abd* (17:1), and *baṣar* (53:17) in connection with the bodily spiritual experience. But this purely linguistic evidence, one for the Night Journey and one for the Ascension, lacked completeness and was therefore inconclusive. Whereas the evidence we present of the Prophet Mūsā's case described in the Qur'ān showing clearly the event of his spiritual experience on the Mount occurring while his bodily state of being remained intact. Indeed, an observant reader of the descriptive passages of the Qur'ān can actually *see* the Prophet Mūsā in his bodily state. Not only that, on the testimony of the Voice of God, God Himself *sees* the Prophet Mūsā bodily! Therefore, our evidence to prove a bodily Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad based on the precise similarity and priority of the bodily spiritual experience in the case of the Prophet Mūsā is complete and conclusive. This means that the way of the *wahy* from behind a veil is that it needs a bodily recipient whose body, while experiencing a spiritual event, remains intact as a body. In the case of the holy Prophet, his body has to undergo a Night Journey and then an Ascension; hence he needs a steed of lighting speed, the Burāq, to transport him in the Night Journey and the Ascension to the Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit to get the verbal and visual account of his Lord as God.

Every Praise be to Allāh, to Whom all Praise is due. We have now come to the end of our discourse. We beseech God to forgive

us where we slip and err, to grant us His succour and His guidance in correctly understanding His words and His signs and symbols whose ultimate meanings He alone knows best.

والله أعلم بالصواب  
الحمد لله رب العالمين  
الصلوة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين  
وعلى آله وأصحابه والتابعين  
لهم بأحسن آل يوم الدين



